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THE NI NEW INTERNATIONALIST

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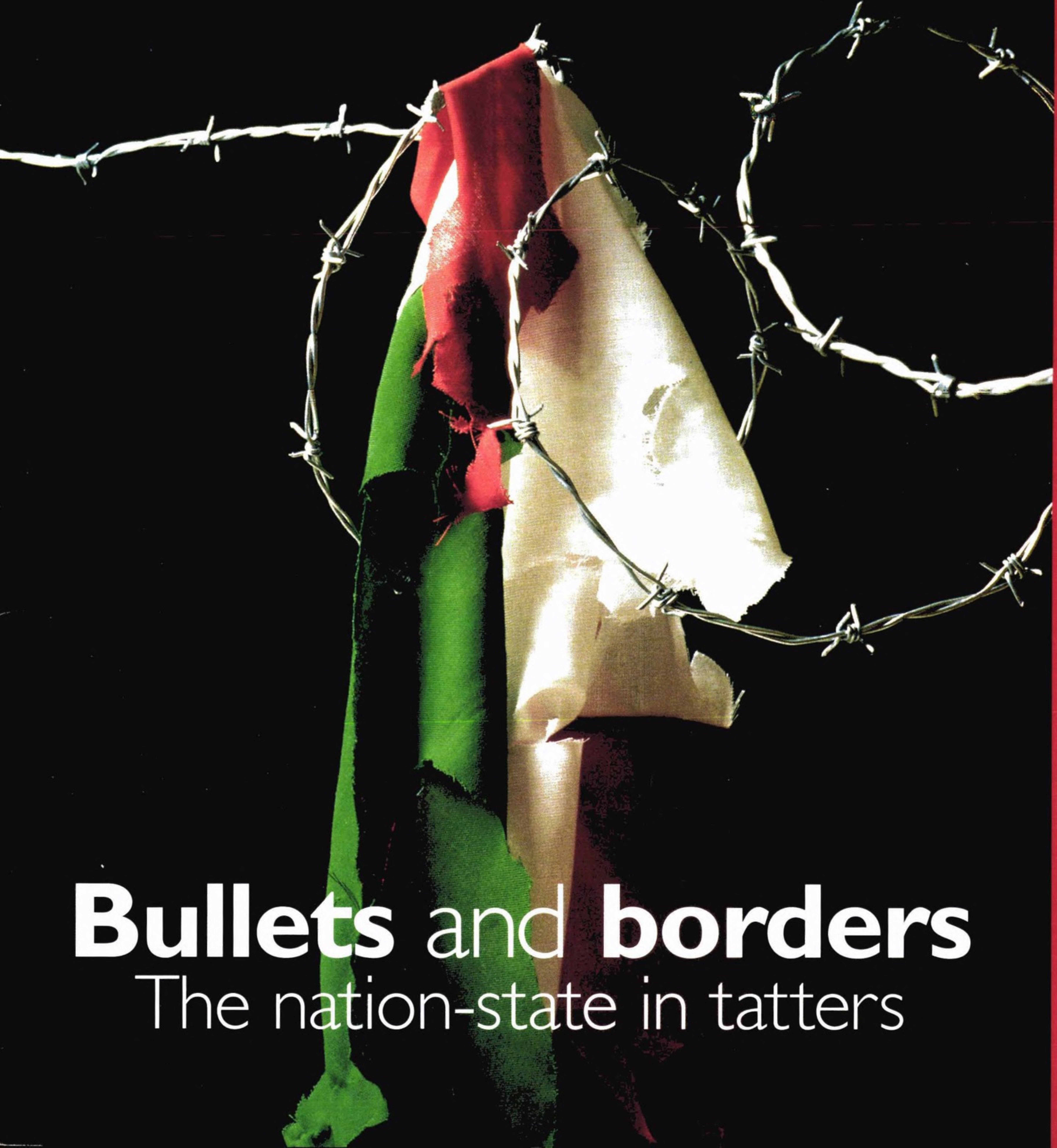
THE PEOPLE, THE IDEAS, THE ACTION IN THE FIGHT FOR WORLD DEVELOPMENT



Bullets and borders

The nation-state in tatters

COMING NEXT MONTH

NIGEL DICKINSON / LEADER PHOTOS

Green economics

Politicians and business leaders steadfastly chant the core mantra of the industrial age: economic growth makes you free, prosperous and happy. Yet the evidence is that the industrial era is reaching a dead end. New technology is destroying millions of jobs; the poisoning and plundering of the environment intensifies; the gap between rich and poor grows wider. In this issue **NI** looks at how we can reshape the economy to put people and the environment first: a guide to building a green economy which is sustainable, equitable and just.

- **Growth up, people down** – why we need economic indicators which reflect what counts as well as what can be counted.
- **Come together** – new economics and the community: a meditation on how we get from here to there.
- **Maleny on my mind** – a journey to a lively green community in Queensland.
- **Green taxes** – a radical but practical guide to taxing resource use rather than income.
- **Just say no** – a feisty Vancouver-based group launches a 'Buy Nothing Day' campaign.
- **Living machines** – how copying nature can help us redesign our industrial system.
- **De-linking** – while Third World economies are being 'adjusted' to death some brave souls have begun to challenge the international financial system by working towards economic self-reliance.

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New Internationalist exists to report on the issues of world poverty and inequality; to focus attention on the unjust relationship between the powerful and powerless in both rich and poor nations; to debate and campaign for the radical changes necessary within and between those nations if the basic material and spiritual needs of all are to be met; and to bring to life the people, the ideas and the action in the fight for world development.

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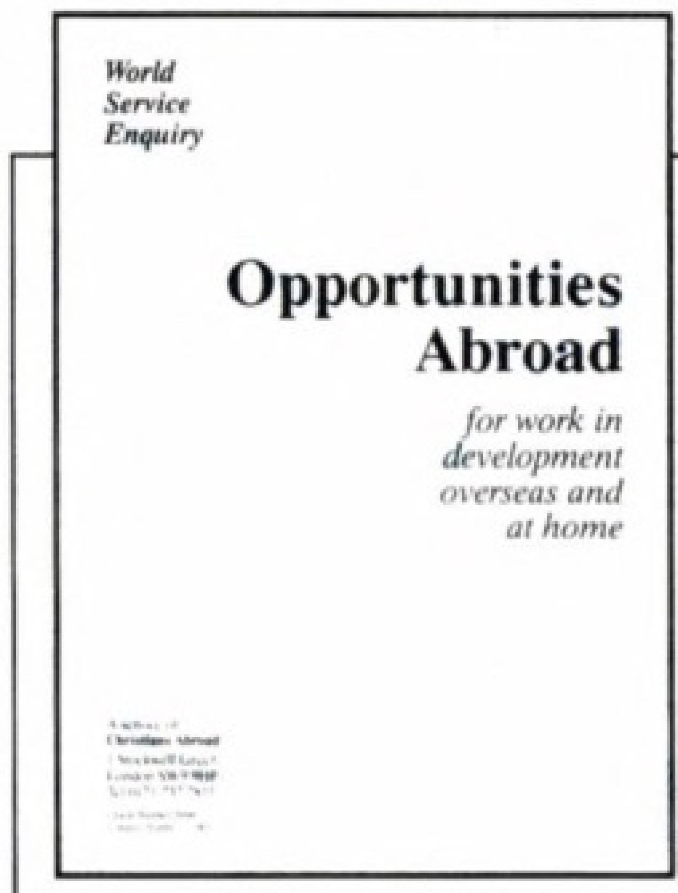
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A Triodos Bank loan has assisted with the restoration of a Grade II listed building in Bradford-On-Avon. The building is being refurbished to house a number of small businesses including a fair trade outlet with direct links with Southern India, a wholefood retailer and an 'ethical' shop combining environmentally friendly products with fair trade.

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PROJECT NO: 26

LIVING EARTH INTERNATIONAL

The Lake Valencia Basin in Venezuela is an area of important agricultural activity yet the high density of companies on the lake shore has resulted in severe pollution and degradation.

Living Earth's educational project is supported by Triodos Bank and is designed to encourage local people to actively find solutions to these problems.

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MAGAZINE DESIGNED BY **IAN NIXON**

THIS MONTH'S **THEME**

Nationalism

FROM THIS MONTH'S **EDITOR**

YOU'VE got to write a really international editor's letter in an issue about nationalism, my colleagues told me. Remember that our readers are Canadian, Australian, Indian, Kenyan, American...

Well I tried. I tried comparing the passions roused by sport to those of nationalism. No good – too Brit. I went home and wrote about the struggles I have had with my own Anglo-Dutch identity. They wouldn't like that either – too European. And the one about the Scottish woman I interviewed about Scottish nationalism in Glasgow; well, it was just too – Scottish.

I just can't do it. As soon as I start writing personally about anything to do with national identity it comes back to Europe, which is where I come from.

Which is probably also why the many fascinating books I have read on the subject during the course of my research were all abstract, academic – and in the third person. They were also almost all by men, which confirms my theories about the links between nationalism and war and my prejudices about boys and war toys.

But I enjoyed commissioning this magazine: so many people felt strongly about their own national identity, and each story and each context shed a different light on the whole. I felt confirmed in my suspicions that this was one of the most important issues facing our world today. I was spell-bound by Ikaweba Bunting's vision of an Africa without boundaries. It was good to have extensive if expensive telephone conversations about feminism and nationalism with Urvashi Butalia in India (see page 26) and equally fascinating discussions with Maggie Murray of Format Photographers who helped me to cook up the idea for the front cover over a delicious Japanese lunch.

Having ideas on nationalism is one thing – and everyone seems to have them, from our Pakistani neighbour to John Major, 'our' Prime Minister (there, I've gone and done it again) – but writing about it personally is quite another. This is especially true if you not only see yourself as an internationalist (as I do), but are writing on supremely international issues (what could be more international than nation-states?) and what is more, work for the *New Internationalist*.

So sorry, folks. I've failed you all. An internationalist keynote? OK. An internationalist editor's letter? Forget it.

Nikki van der Gaag

Nikki van der Gaag
for the ***New Internationalist*** *Co-operative*

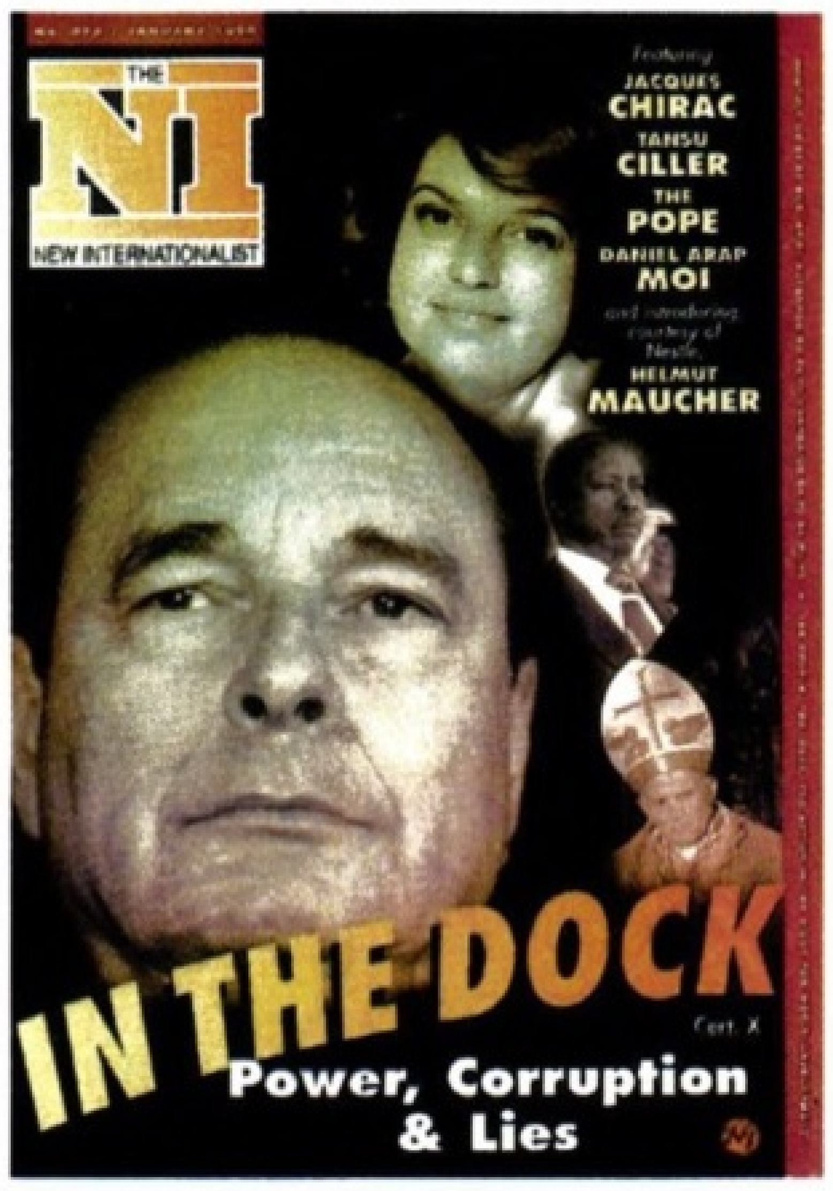
Letters

The New Internationalist welcomes your letters. But please keep them short. They may be edited for purposes of space or clarity. Include a home telephone number if possible and send your letters to the nearest editorial office. The address and e-mail is inside the front cover.

Church rules

I'm sure you've had millions of letters expressing outrage about your 'trial' of the Pope (***In the Dock* NI 275**) – I don't want to add to those! In his defence, though, two things should be said:

1) Unlike political dictators such as Idi Amin, the Pope has no means of enforcing his 'rules'. Such rules as are enforced by social pressures are often not Church doctrine but local superstitions.



2) The Church teaches a way of life that includes forgiveness of enemies, love of one's neighbour, care for the disadvantaged etc. In such a world contraception might be less necessary than it now appears.

However, people have no trouble in ignoring those rules. They continue killing each other, lying, cheating, stealing, so that a world which could provide sufficient for all appears overcrowded. Rather than berate the Pope for his teachings, surely it would be simpler just to ignore that ruling along with all the others?

Charles Phillips
Bromley, England

Mistrial

I was disappointed and offended by ***In the Dock* (NI 275)**. We were asked to imagine that the Editor had obtained the power to try five of his least favourite public figures for 'crimes against humanity'. The issue was thereby turned into a set of political show-trials, bearing more than a passing resemblance to the methods used by the world's nastier regimes against their opponents. It is deeply offensive that the **NI** should stoop to such methods, even in fun.

Each of your articles ended with a 'requested sentence'. I have one for the **NI**: an indefinite period of objective and well-argued journalism.

Release the New Internationalist Five on the grounds of a mistrial.

Chris Baker
Witney, England

Women and the veil

I was disturbed by the implications in *Curiosities* (**NI 275**) about Muslim women covering their faces in public. The questions and answers read together seemed to unquestioningly link Islam, women covering their faces and the oppression of women.

I am sure that most **NI** readers will agree that the *chaderi* can be seen as a means of restricting women, but it could also be argued that so are high heels and tight skirts.

Choice of dress is a highly complex interplay of custom, personal identity and the meaning we attach to different modes of dress. We can only start to understand the choices people make when we look at the real choices available to them and how they understand their options and constraints. Wearing a veil may mean quite different things to different women. I think we have to ask deeper questions about why we find veiled women disturbing.

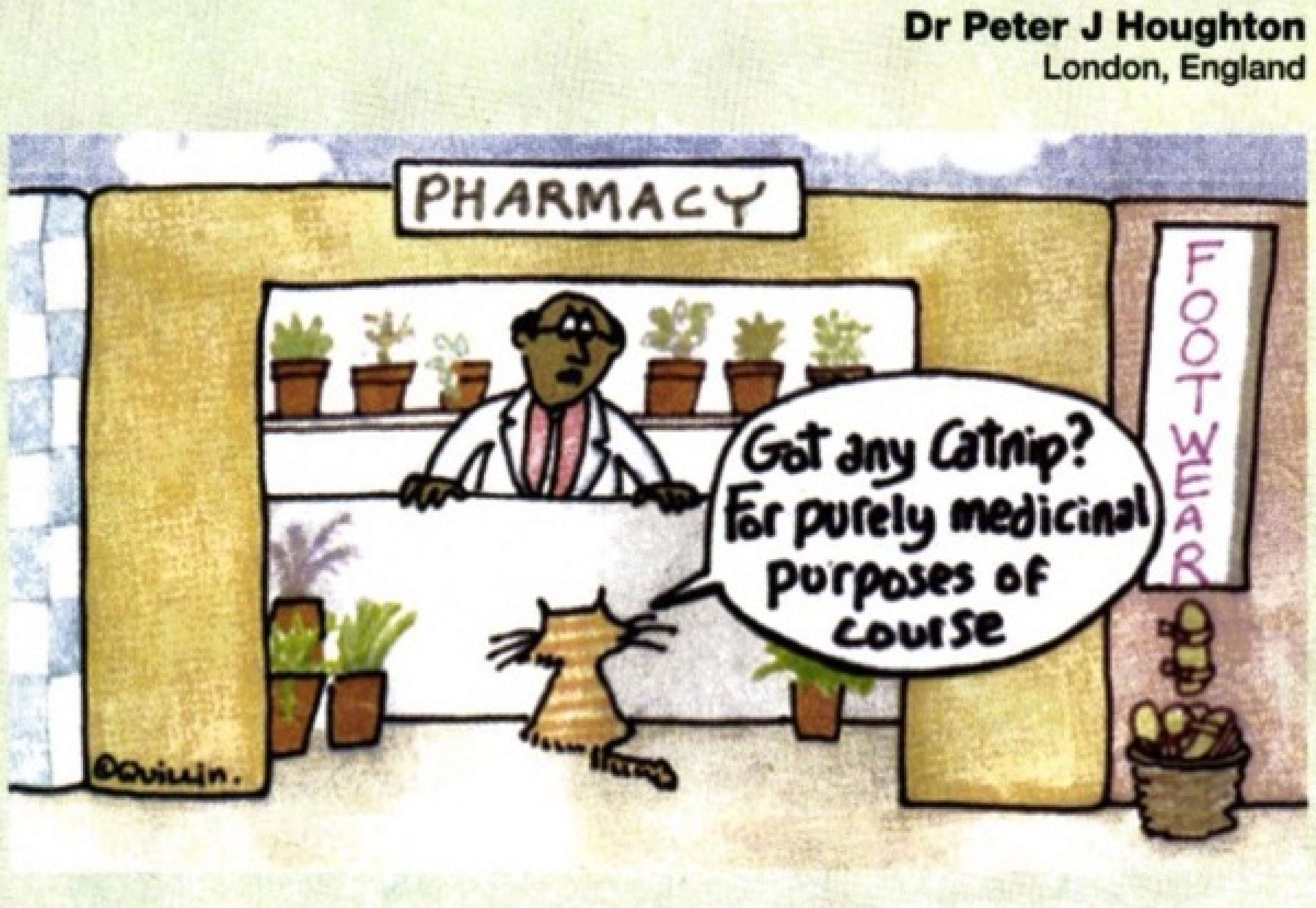
And if we really do believe that covering one's face in public is a sign of repression we have to work towards the liberation of women, so that all women are able to make real choices not only about what they wear but about all aspects of their lives.

Sarah J Matthews
Ipswich, England

Herbal medicine

I was disappointed that your issue on ***Medicine* (NI 272)** underplayed the important role of herbal medicine in many parts of the world. The WHO acknowledges its importance in developing countries where 80 per cent of the population still relies on it as the main type of primary healthcare. In many areas the significant work is being done by small groups working with communities to help safeguard both the traditional knowledge and the relevant plants from extinction. In the West there is a resurgence of interest although, since this is largely linked to self-medication, it has become vulnerable to commercial exploitation and also the risks of toxic effects have increased.

Dr Peter J Houghton
London, England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Torture survivors

I was very encouraged to see that you had mentioned the psychological problems of Tibetan refugees in India in your issue on ***Tibet* (NI 274)**. I have just returned from Dharamsala, where I worked as a medical officer for one year. We carried out a mental health study of 35 Tibetan nuns and students who had been tortured in Tibet, and compared our results with a matched group of refugees who had not been tortured.

In the whole group, 41 per cent showed symptoms of anxiety, and 14 per cent had depression. Those who had been tortured had higher rates of anxiety but not depression. On average they had experienced 13 different forms of torture and been in prison for 21 months. Those nuns and students who had been politicized before being imprisoned and were prepared for the abuse, had much lower rates of anxiety and depression than those who were tortured unexpectedly. The political commitment to their struggle, as well as their Buddhist belief, contributed to the 'resilience' that I often heard talked about. Unfortunately similar torture survivor programs have been slow to get off the ground.

Timothy H Holtz
Jamaica Plain, MA, US

Grameen Bank

I read with interest your article on the Grameen Bank (*Update* **NI 274**). My immediate reaction on reading about the Bank's progress and principles was one of hope and inspiration. The article gave hope that the Bank's lending scheme could genuinely offer a way out of poverty not only for the world's poorest countries, but for the poor all over the world. It also inspired me to contribute in some way to the Bank's own aims of reaching out to a third of the world's poor by the year 2005.

A full story on the Grameen Bank would make a very interesting read which I, for one, would enormously appreciate.

Riza A Momin
London, England

Part of the world

A response to Mark Mann's letter (*Letters* **NI 274**) about 'seeking solutions'. It is depressing sometimes to read of the poverty, oppression and ecological depredations going on in the world. The result is a feeling of powerlessness, combined with self-hatred when we consider our own materially rich lives, But we also know that randomly giving things up ourselves is not going to help a tortured prisoner or make grain grow in the desert.

I believe that one way of progress is to pay attention to oneself. Ask questions about yourself – only do what is important to you. Work on yourself, and you work on the world. You are part of it.

Rosalind Riley
Kent, England

Failed capitalism

According to the International Labour Organisation, the present figure for unemployment in all the capitalist countries of the world is 30 per cent. According to UNESCO, since the return of capitalism in Russia half a million extra people die every year. In Africa half a million kids die every year just from debt service, paying interest to bankers. And 11 million kids die of easily treatable diseases. In the United States, 30 million go hungry. In Britain, we have massive unemployment, growing job insecurity and falling standards of healthcare and education.

The only things growing are capitalists' dividends and bonuses, corruption and crime. It is the reckless pursuit of profit, not the pursuit of the common good, that ruins society. It is capitalism that has failed, not communism.

Will Podmore
London, England

CORRECTION

In ***Brave New World*** (**NI 276**) on page 18, 'Megamyths', there is an error in the colour coding of the key: 'Cities with 10 million+' should be mauve (5.5% of total population in the North, 2.4% in the South), 'Smaller urban centres' should be green (47.5% and 22.9% respectively).

The views expressed on the letters page are not necessarily those of the New Internationalist.

LETTER FROM **RUSSIA**

Stale-mate

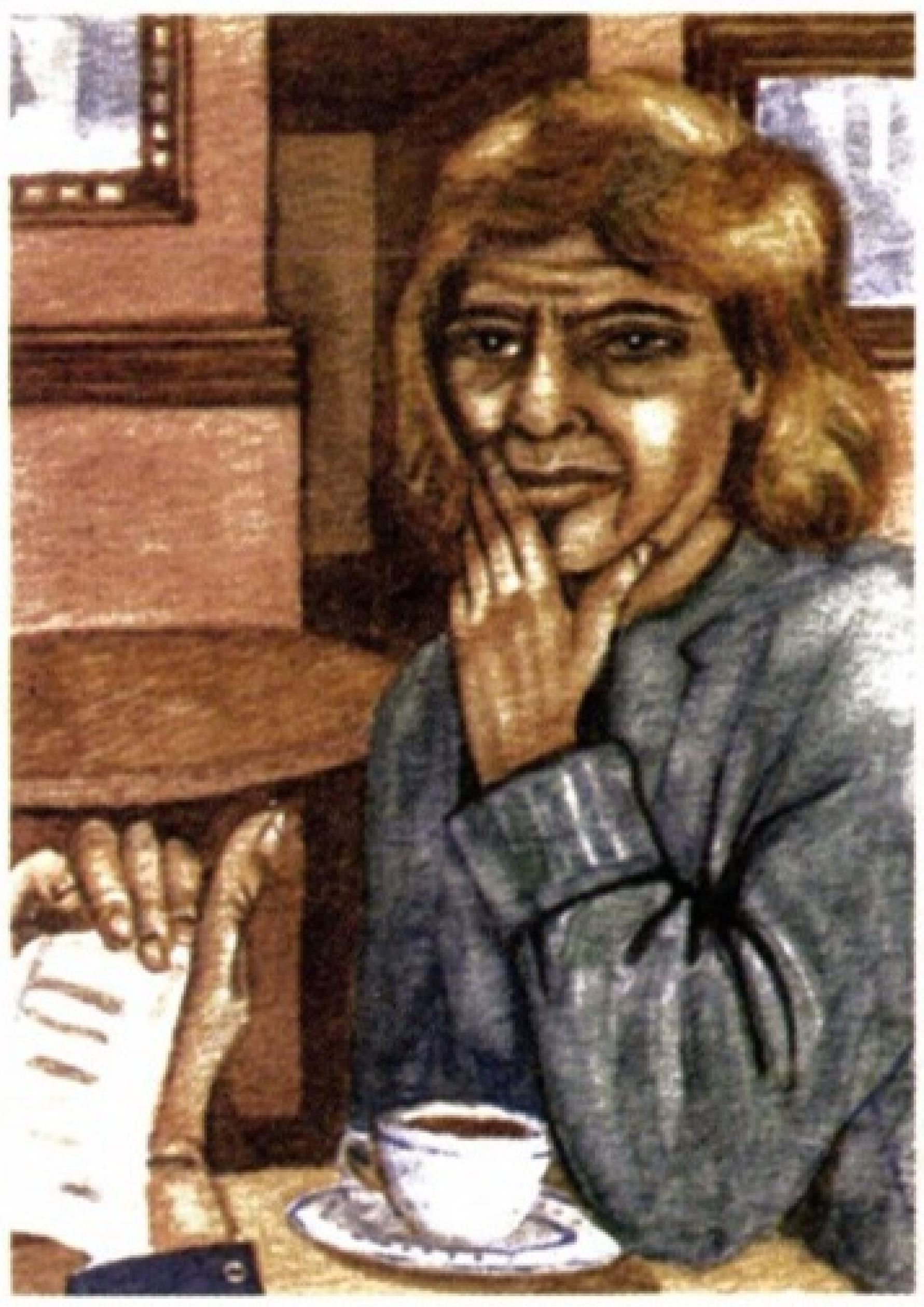
Olivia Ward finds a gulf growing between her and her friend Galina. And there is nothing either of them can do about it.

I SHOULD be looking forward to Saturday, the day when I'll get together with my closest Moscow friend, Galina.

But as the day approaches, I am frozen with embarrassment. Galina and I haven't seen each other for a month, but not because of any bad feeling. We've shared each other's jokes and misadventures since I came to Russia three years ago. There is no-one more warm, perceptive or understanding.

But the thing that upsets me is money. Something that is throwing up bigger and bigger barriers between people in this society, as effective as the walls surrounding the monster homes of the newly-rich.

In a Western country we would be on an equal footing. In this topsy-turvy place, a simple friendship is an emotional tightrope.


MIRIAM McCURDY

We live forty-five minutes away from each other, a wearing trip by cab or bus or metro. And, especially to a Russian, unthinkable without a meal at the end of it.

At first things seemed easy. I was new in the country, Galina pointed out. A visitor. That called for a trip to a concert, and eventually to her small neat apartment where a chicken would be roasting in a sputtering oven. In those days admission prices were cheap, transit costs negligible and food prices affordable though climbing. But over the months inflation exploded, while Galina's salary stayed flat. Even a university department head could not make ends meet without moonlighting at other jobs.

As the months passed, the circles under Galina's eyes grew darker. With a gravely ill mother, an ailing student son and an apartment that was crumbling by the month, she was like a woman walking through financial quicksand.

I persuaded her to come to my flat for meals, uneasily watching her stare at the pricey ingredients she could no longer afford. Sometimes she would join me for a café dinner or a pastry-saturated afternoon at a glossy hotel coffee shop.

But sooner or later the bill would arrive. When I paid it, as discreetly as possible, there was no point in pretending that the tab was 'absolutely nothing.' Galina knew it was the equivalent of her family's grocery bill for a week.

Soon she told me sadly that she couldn't go on accepting these treats. Arguments about repaying her early hospitality had died of exhaustion. And guilt choked me when accepting her invitations to dine on the high-priced delicacies she believed were staples of the Western diet. Opting for a walk in the woods and a cup of tea only seemed patronizing.

Our friendship was reaching a stalemate. The meals were merely symbolic of the huge division between us, one that showed up every aspect of our lifestyles. It wasn't only the economic effect of inflation but the emotional fallout. Once a member of Russia's urban élite, Galina was used to an equal relationship with her friends. Now in a city that was one of the most expensive in the world, she could see people like herself begging in subways to survive.

When she got an after-hours job with a Western company, I thought her fortunes would rise. But, she explained wryly, 'they wanted to hire a Russian. That means they want to pay Russian wages.'

In Russia there is now a three-tiered system: top pay for foreigners who venture into the rugged East. Fractional wages for the Russians who do much the same jobs in joint ventures or new Russian companies. And rock-bottom pay for those in traditional institutional jobs.

But inflation attacks everybody the same way. All that saves many Russians from starvation is their old dirt-cheap state flats. Like many people, Galina could privatize and sell her apartment. But she would end up homeless after a year or two in one of the astronomically expensive flats leased by gouging landlords who know they can always find a tenant to pay their soaring rents.

I think about this as Saturday approaches and I visualize the new stress lines in Galina's face, the deeper hollows in her cheeks. And the inevitable stories of daily struggles that are ageing and breaking down this courageous woman.

I leaf through a pile of economic reports on Russia, trying to find some light at the end of what seems an endless dark tunnel for people like Galina.

'In spite of its problems the market economy is already a success,' enthused one. 'It has introduced Russians to a concept they never dreamed of under communism: Freedom of choice.' ■

Olivia Ward is bureau chief for the *Toronto Star* in Moscow.

Update

ENVIRONMENT

Arid Aral

Shrinking sea spreads poison

STEVE PERCY / PANOS

High and dry: ships left stranded as the Aral retreats to half its size of 30 years ago.

In the lobby of the maternity hospital a faded Soviet wall-painting shows a radiant young mother cradling her new-born child before the bountiful Aral Sea. In a bare ward upstairs, a mother bulging with her second child struggles to lift herself from the bed. She is suffering from acute anaemia, a pandemic which has hit Karakalpakstan – a semi-autonomous state of Uzbekistan bordering the now-dead Aral Sea.

'If you take into account the fact that 97 per cent of the women have anaemia, we are witnessing the degeneration of our people,' says Dr Ataniyazova, a gynaecologist and a director of the state's Centre for Human Reproduction and Family Planning.

Children too are born with anaemia, which lowers their immunity. Infant mortality in Karakalpakstan exceeds 80 per thousand live births, 50 per cent above the average for Uzbekistan.

Nor is this the only debilitating condition. Kidney and thyroid diseases, stomach and liver cancers, viral hepatitis and respiratory disorders are all on the increase. One in five young men is found unfit for military service.

Local doctors blame environmental factors. The Aral Sea, once the fourth-largest lake in the world, has shrunk to half its size in the last 30 years due to the diversion of water for thirsty cotton upstream. Local people are forced to drink polluted drainage water laden with salts and agricultural chemicals. And in the winter fierce winds whip up toxic particles from the former seabed, depositing them far and wide.

'We have pollution all over our territory,' says Dr Ataniyazova. 'It's in the air, the water and the food.' A slow poisoning may be entering the food chain through vegetables, fruit and the few fish that are still caught in local reservoirs.

Since 1993 the five Central Asian Republics have been working with the World Bank and other donors to rehabilitate the Aral. This pledge was recently renewed and some progress is being made. Drainage efficiency is being increased and clean drinking water supplies are being laid. But this cannot come soon enough for the one million people of Karakalpakstan who have the misfortune to live at the wrong end of the Aral Sea basin. ■

Steve Percy/Panos

Ozone split

The ozone layer is thinning twice as fast as predicted and could be vulnerable to further damage over the next decade. It is ten years since 49 countries signed the global treaty to protect the ozone layer, although most developing countries did not join the treaty until 1990, when industrial countries agreed to help them foot the bill for giving up ozone-destroying chemicals. They now receive $150 million a year, and have promised to ban CFCs, halons, methyl chloroform and carbon tetrachloride by 2010, ten years later than the Montreal deadline for rich countries.

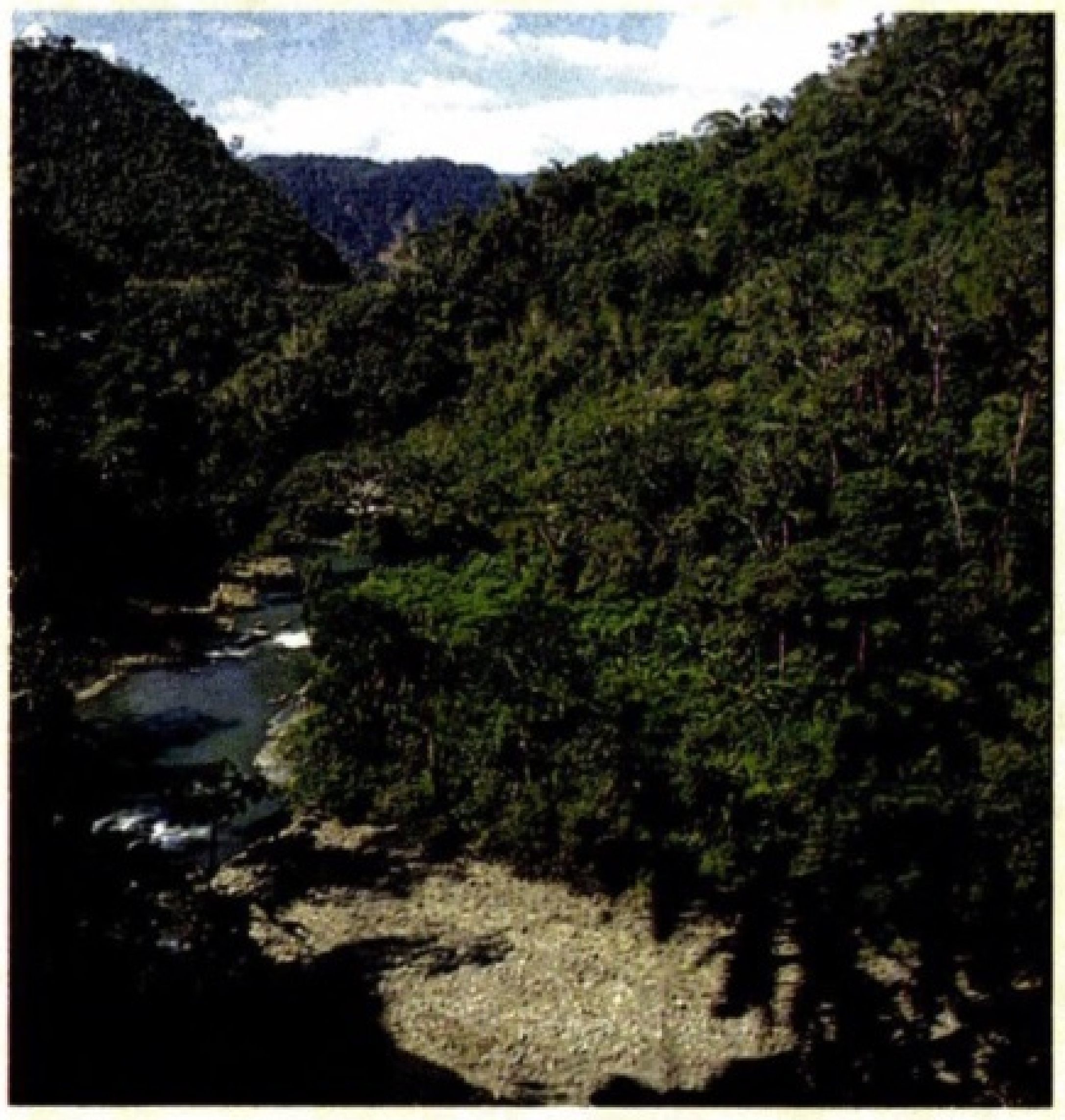
But scientists are now saying that the ozone layer would recover faster if all countries also phased out HCFCs – a replacement for CFCs – and the pesticide methyl bromide. Industrial nations have already agreed to ban these. But developing countries refuse to agree to any more phase-outs without more aid, while wealthy countries refuse to consider more aid without more phase-outs.

New Scientist, No 2007

Tambopata tests

Mobil Oil has concluded seismic tests for oil and gas in the Madre de Dios region of the Peruvian Amazon. The region includes the Upper Tambopata, the coffee-growing area around the valley of the Tambopata River on the Andean escarpment, where there are already serious environmental concerns (see NI 271). Environmental management and work plans have been presented to the Peruvian Government's Institute for the Management of Natural Resources (INRENA) and are expected to be approved. The Plans raise a number of questions, including the lack of any independent monitoring of Mobil's field activities. Mobil have been joined by Occidental, Exxon and Elf in a Madre de Dios development consortium, and by Shell for exploration on the river Urubamba downstream from Machu Picchu.

TreeS News, No 31
Write to John G Winston, Environmental Manager, Mobil Exploration and Development Latin America Inc, PO Box 650232, Dallas, Texas 75265-0232, USA, fax: 214 905 7283.



DAVID RANSOM

Oil prospect: the Tambopata Valley under threat.

THE COVERT & OPERATIONAL PROCUREMENT EXHIBITION
COPEX 95

Writs

COPEX International Ltd is suing Mirror Group Newspapers, *Peace News*, *Green Line* and 76-year-old Alan Staley – a Quaker who wrote to the manager of the Sandown Exhibition Centre – after the Covert and Operational Procurement Exhibition (COPEX) staged at Sandown Park, England, in November 1994. COPEX has run 24 exhibitions of equipment and services for 'internal security, counter insurgency and special operations' around the world since 1982. The 1994 exhibition attracted representatives from Algeria, China, Colombia, Iran, Israel, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka and Turkey. The COPEX writs relate to critical leaflets and articles published at the time of the conference. Small publications face crippling defence costs and are asking for financial support.

Green Line, Catalyst Collective Ltd, PO Box 5, Lostwithiel, Cornwall PL22 0YT, England.

Safe conduct

Campaigns in Europe and the US are gathering pace to introduce enforceable Codes of Conduct on the arms trade. In Europe, vague criteria allow Britain, for example, to export arms to Indonesia while Portugal, Italy and Sweden impose a ban because of Indonesia's poor human-rights record. The aim is to get a Code incorporated into the Maastricht Treaty. Drawn up by Saferworld, BASIC and the World Development Movement, it has already gained the support of the European Parliament, over 600 non-governmental organizations and many eminent figures, including the Dalai Lama and Desmond Tutu. In the US a similar Code is before Congress. Regional Codes are the building blocks of an initiative pioneered by the Nobel Peace Prize winner Dr Oscar Arias Sanchez, the former president of Costa Rica, who is gathering the backing of other Nobel laureates for an international Code which will be put before the UN.

Saferworld
Contact Saferworld, Third Floor, 34 Alfred Place, London WC1E 7DP, tel: 44 171 580 8886, fax: 44 171 631 1444

Stigma

Rape case shocks women in India

Bhanwari Devi from the village of Bhateri in Rajasthan has begun what she calls a 'lifetime of stigma'. For her the facts are clear – three years after she filed a rape complaint with the police against five wealthy villagers, the court has dismissed her case and acquitted all the accused. But for others, the case has brought caste and gender strife to the fore and been invested with symbolic importance.

Bhanwari Devi was a so-called backward-caste *sathin* (voluntary worker) in Rajasthan state's much-touted Women's Development Project (WDP) aimed at making rural women participants in development. Her job was to prevent child marriages and it brought her into the line of fire. Among the men she charges with rape is Ram Karan Gujjar. Shortly before the incident she had prevented him from marrying off his one-year-old daughter. She alleges that on the evening of 22 September 1992 he attacked her and her husband in a field. Gujjar was accompanied by his two brothers, his uncle and another man. Bhanwari Devi was raped by two of the men.

The case has highlighted the threats facing other *sathins*. Citing Bhanwari's case, five women's groups have filed a petition with the Supreme Court asking for the protection of women government employees. Women's groups have brought pressure to have the case shifted from the hands of the local police to the Central Bureau of Investigations. It has also thrust Bhanwari into the spotlight – her presence at the Beijing Women's Conference confirmed that she had become something of a model for activist groups.

With the acquittal comes the battle to carry the case further, as there is little doubt for the groups that have supported her that Bhanwari is telling the truth. The judgement itself has been branded as 'the epitome of gender bias in the judiciary' and is riddled with assumptions that would shame most amateur sociologists. Within the 26-page-long verdict delivered by Judge Jagpal Singh are astounding statements such as: 'It isn't possible in Indian culture that a man who has taken a vow to protect his wife, in front of the holy fire, just stands and watches his wife being raped, when only two men almost twice his age are holding him.' The judgement also states that it is highly improbable that an uncle and his nephews would commit rape together. The presence of one Brahmin amongst those accused leads the judge to observe that gangs in rural areas are not usually multi-caste and so the accused could not have acted together.

The verdict also harps on the fact that Bhanwari didn't lodge her complaint immediately and that the medical examination took place 52 hours after the incident. Explanations such as the shame and victimization of Indian women who have been raped are not mentioned at all.

The acquittal has united women activists across the country who are preparing to launch a concerted campaign against the verdict. Bhanwari will be starting her struggle for justice all over again, too. 'Since the day I was raped, I have lost all my options. The only way ahead is to fight.' ■

Vijay Jung Thapa
India Today

Bhanwari Devi: 'The only way ahead is to fight.'

Update

LABOUR

Toys Я Them

Asian workers on the cheap

CHILDREN'S toys are a political minefield, as many parents already know: Barbie suggests women are bimbos; toy guns reward aggressive behaviour. But there are other considerations that are equally if not more pressing: a toy bought as a child's gift may have been made on the other side of the globe by harried, underpaid, women shift workers in unsafe surroundings.

European children receive on average $240 worth of toys each year while US kids clock up a whopping $310 worth. Though the toys are made for big-name companies such as Mattel and Hasbro, the work is subcontracted to Asian companies which undercut others by paying lower wages. According to the Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR) over 75 per cent of toys sold in Britain are made in Asia by a workforce that is predominantly female.

CHRISTIAN AID

Concerns were first raised after a fire in a Thai factory in May last year killed 188 workers because fire exits were locked. Since 1993 at least 250 Asian toy workers have been killed and hundreds more injured in industrial accidents.

But safety isn't the only issue in the forefront of workers' minds. Take Duan (not her real name) who works in a Thai factory producing Disney merchandise for Mattel. She is paid below the estimated minimum survival wage, lives in one room with her husband in a cement dormitory building next to the factory and works a 13-hour day, six days a week.

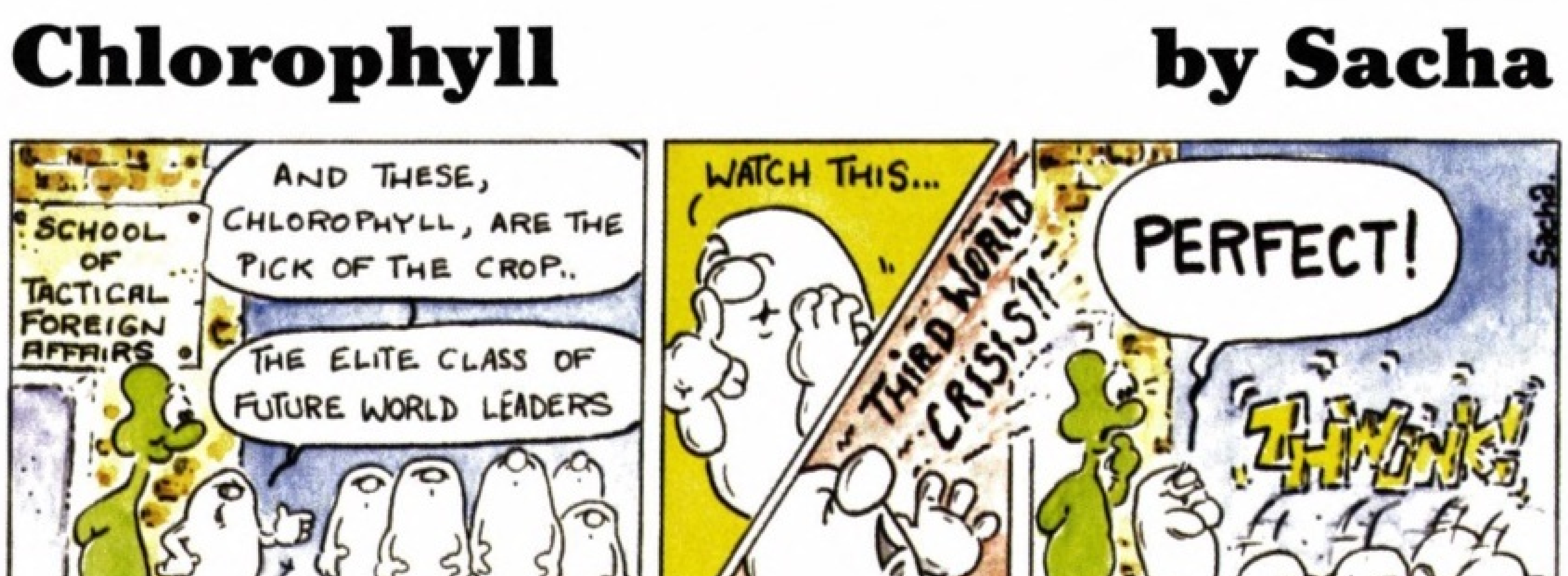
'When there are a lot of orders, I have to sew about 50 pieces an hour,' she says. 'If we don't reach this quota, we are harassed by supervisors. We suffer from back and neck aches. Hurrying to meet quotas, I have pricked my fingers with the needles.' The company does not provide protective masks, so many workers complain of respiratory problems from inhaling dust from the toys' stuffing. Workers are allowed to use the toilet three times a day and get one meal break.

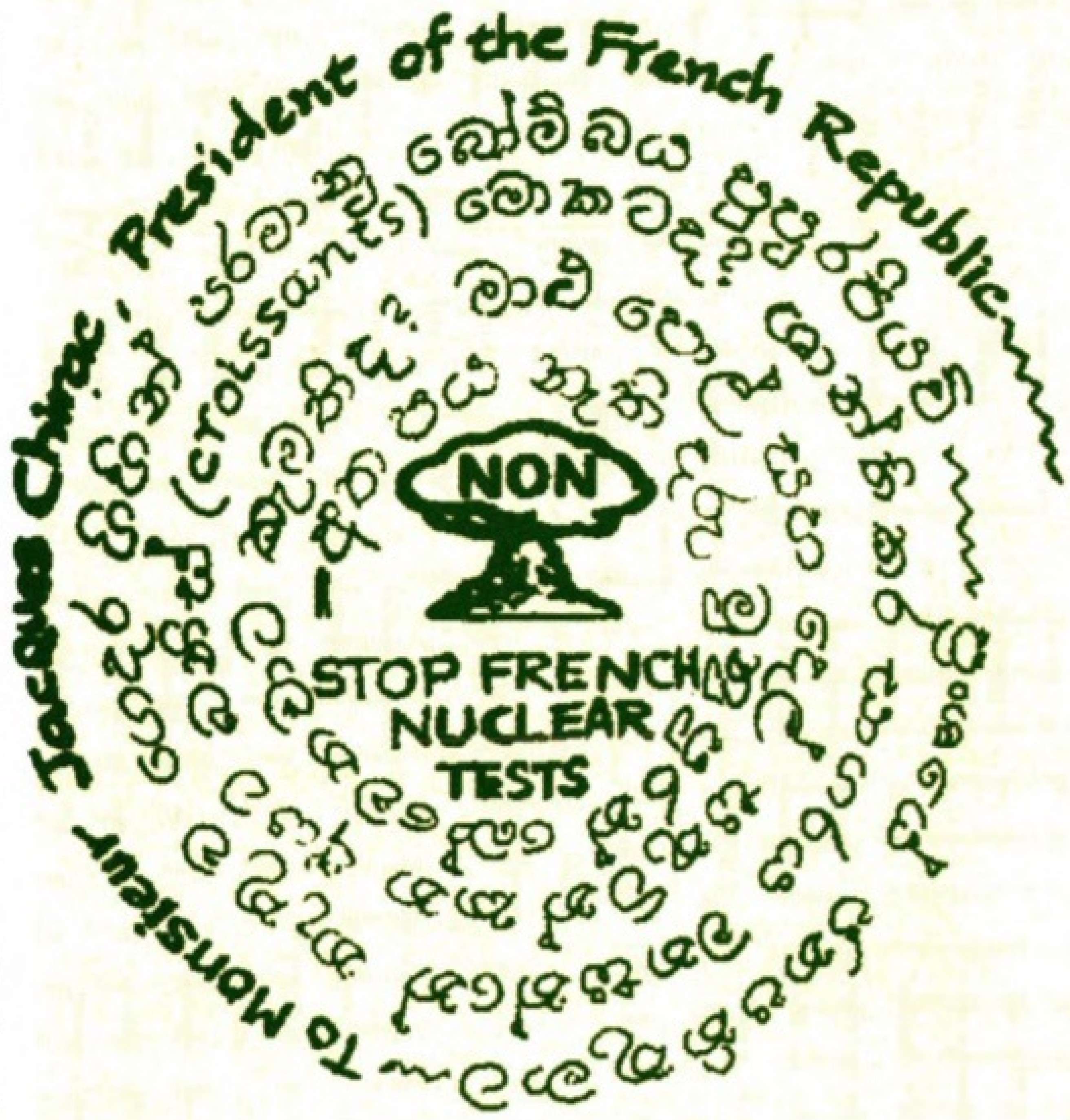
Similar conditions prevail in garment and sportswear sweatshops that turn out gear for big-name brands. Christian Aid is campaigning for better pay and improved factory conditions in companies that sub-contract work for sports-shoe makers Reebok, Nike, Puma, Adidas and Hi-Tec. They point out that these companies pay out millions of dollars to get endorsements from big-name sports personalities like Linford Christie. The $38 million that Reebok are said to be paying Liverpool Football Club would be enough to more than double the wages of the 40,000 workers who make Reebok trainers in China and the Philippines. Christian Aid is asking its supporters to write to these five companies urging them to pay higher wages and enforce codes of practice to improve factory conditions.

The CIIR, World Development Movement and Trades Union Congress in Britain have been negotiating with toy companies in Europe over a new Safety Code for Asian workers. ■

Bethan Brookes and Peter Madden/ Christian Aid
Sue Montgomery/Gemini
Contact Christian Aid, PO Box 100, London SE1 7RT, England.

Chlorophyll by Sacha


SCHOOL OF TACTICAL FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AND THESE, CHLOROPHYLL, ARE THE PICK OF THE CROP..
THE ELITE CLASS OF FUTURE WORLD LEADERS
WATCH THIS...
THIRD WORLD CRISIS!!
PERFECT!
THINK!
Sacha


To Monsieur Jacques Chirac, President of the French Republic
(croissants)
NON
STOP FRENCH NUCLEAR TESTS

This 'spiral' is printed on postcards in Sri Lanka which are designed to be sent in large numbers to Jacques Chirac as a protest against French nuclear tests. The spiral, in Sinhalese, includes messages like: 'Fresh bread-fruit, fish are gone – no thanks to French croissants'; 'President Chirac basks in the glory of his triumph – bursting bombs in Polynesia's atolls'. Stickers and greetings cards were also produced and folk songs performed in schools, prisons and at public gatherings. A demonstration was organized outside the French Embassy in Colombo by Women for Peace.

SA Jawarardene
Contact: Mangalika de Silva, Women for Peace 425/15 Thimbirigasyaya Road, Colombo 5, Sri Lanka.

Categorized

Vets at Cornell University in New York are designing a personality test that predicts what kittens will be like when they grow up. The test will use 13 different measures, such as how the kitten reacts to being petted or to silhouettes of a dog and a cat while recordings of barks and miaows are played. Kittens will be divided into three types: 'lap cats', 'wild cats' or 'fearful cats'. The test could be given to cats taken into shelters in the US – between four and six million of them every year – so that prospective owners know what's in store for them.

New Scientist No 2011

Quote

"My silence is very noisy. Nothing and no-one can silence my spirit. There are no boundaries or prisons to the human spirit. I am still alive."

Mordechai Vanunu, the whistleblower who exposed Israel's secret nuclear weapons programme. Kidnapped by the Israeli secret services in Rome, he has spent eight-and-a-half years of his 18-year prison sentence in solitary confinement.

PAUL LOWE / MAGNUM

Bullets and borders

The nation-state is on its last legs – but people are still prepared to die for their country. **Nikki van der Gaag** finds out why.

As I write this, Chechen separatists and their civilian hostages have been pounded to pieces by the Russian army in the village of Pervomayskoye. Some, to the Russians' chagrin, have escaped, many have died, hostages and fighters alike smashed to bloody pulp. The Chechens were prepared to die – and if necessary to see their hostages die – for the sake of something they prize more than life: a country of their own.

Across the other side of Africa, three women sit in the middle of the Algerian desert. They have eyes only for their work. They are sewing a large brightly-coloured carpet: greens and reds and yellows and blues on a black background. In the middle are the Arabic words: *Al watan aw al mowt*. A homeland or death. These are Sahrawi women, whose people have been fighting a 22-year battle to wrest their piece of desert from Moroccan rule.

And in the rugged mountains of the Pyrenees, Basque separatists gather to discuss a new strategy – one which this time will involve negotiations rather than bombs.

All three groups of people are prepared to risk their lives in order to win a country of their own.

Nationalist struggles have a long history, but the quest for nationhood – often using the tools of violence and, like the Chechens, enduring an even greater violence – is today at flood level. This is hardly surprising. The nation-state has become the main form of human political organization. Nationalism can and does succeed – though the price can be very high.

More and more new countries are being born. The disappearance of communism alone created 20 new states to add to the existing 165 members of the United Nations.[1] It would seem that our world is becoming increasingly fragmented into smaller and smaller nation-states, built around a common language, religion or creed. So the nations who have been hoping and battling for recognition for decades – or sometimes even centuries – have some justification for intensifying their struggles for a state of their own.

Stiff upper lips – but beneath the protocol in Nairobi a new nation was waiting to be born.

GEORGE RODGER / MAGNUM

Motivations may vary, but in a world characterized by a 'crisis of ideologies', this resurgence of nationalism is hardly surprising. The demise of traditional belief-systems, including the communist one, has left a feeling of hopelessness and chaos. This makes the siren call to 'national identity' all the sweeter. To claim such an identity is to locate oneself in the world.

Imagined communities

So what is this elusive 'national identity'? Is it inherent in each of us, or an artificial creation? Is it true that 'a man [sic] must have a nationality as he must have a nose and two ears'?[2] Benedict Anderson, in a fascinating study, defined a national community as an 'imagined community'. It is '*imagined* because members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.'[3] Neither language, nor ethnicity nor religion, he argues, are sufficiently held in common to explain what a 'nation' really is.

Nationalism, then, 'is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness; it invents nations where they do not exist.'[2] Politicians are adept at planting such inventions or imaginings in the minds of their people, especially in times of loss or crisis or change. National liberation movements in Africa during the 1950s and 1960s needed to re-invent themselves as nations in order to shake off the shackles of colonialism. As Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia put it at the time: 'Our aim has been to create genuine nations from the sprawling artefacts the colonialists carved out.' In 1958 Jacques Rabemananjara, the Malagasy nationalist, made another fine distinction: 'One thing's certain, in today's political vocabulary the word nationalism means, generally, the unanimous movement of coloured peoples against Western domination. What does it matter if the word doesn't really describe the phenomenon which we like to apply to it? What fired the activists was never an imagined spectacle of the beauties of the nation-state, but the promise that the coming of the nation-state would strike away the chains of foreign rule and all that these had meant in social and moral deprivation.'[4]

Another way of helping to create an 'imagined community' is to use the past to shore up the present. Rooting the community in former glories – imagined or not – helps foster a spirit of optimism in the present. Thus Simón Bolivar in Colombia, Juan and Evita Peron in Argentina, Jawarharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi in India, are all used as icons on which to hang the emotions of current nationalisms. In former Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milosević linked old stories about Croat atrocities with promises of Serbian greatness to fill the emotional and economic hole left by Tito's death. The ultra-right nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovsky continually harks back to Russia's former greatness to harness current discontent. It is often thus: one ideology of repression replaces another.

Banal nationalism

But the spirit of 'nation' is also kept alive by the stuff of everyday life. The sociologist Michael Billig has a term for this: 'banal nationalism'. It is the nationalism of flags – waved and unwaved; of national anthems; of rousing language ('our country' or 'our nation'); of processions and celebrations to mark national days or battlefield heroics shrouded in the mists of time.[5] Banal nationalism is the lingua franca that underpins our conscious and unconscious identity with nation. From Washington to Warsaw, it is the fodder on which the media and politicians so eagerly feed.

In times of crisis it can easily be turned into what Billig calls 'hot nationalism' – the rallying-cry that sends armies to war, or inspires separatists to struggle against insuperable odds. For the politician, having an enemy on whom to turn the guns diverts attention from domestic pain – as both Margaret Thatcher and George Bush found to their considerable advantage in the Falklands/Malvinas and Gulf Wars.

A victory gives your nation kudos. This is why war and bloodshed, conflict and death always play a special role in nationalist iconography. It is also a reason why women, as non-warriors and thus second-class citizens, are excluded from nationalist thinking – though of course they may support nationalist struggles. 'As a woman,' wrote Virginia Woolf, 'I have no country. As a woman, my country is the world.'

Nationalism is an ideology which shuts other people out; which defines 'Us' against 'Them'. To call yourself Australian or Chilean or Sri Lankan is to draw a psychological as well as a physical boundary around yourself and those who claim the same national identity. The fact that 'We' are inside that boundary, or border, neces-

麥斯威爾
Maxwell House®

CHRIS STOWERS / PANOS

Maxwell House at home in Shanghai: multinational advertising shows no respect for borders.

sarily means that 'They' are outside it. And woe betide 'Them' – be they across the water, or within 'our' country but different from 'us' in creed, origin or skin colour – if they seem to threaten our imagined community. We will show no mercy in the defence of 'our' nation.

Ethnicity

Of course not all conflict is based on national identity. And neither is all nationalism rooted in ethnicity. Despite such preconceptions, less than ten per cent of all states in the United Nations consist mainly of one ethnic group. Most are polyethnic – Cameroon, for example, has 124 different languages and dialects, 4 different religions and over 200 separate 'tribal' groupings. Many have several large ethnic groups and some – Malaysia, Nigeria, Belgium and Canada among them – are divided between two main ethnic groups.

Nationalist struggles may draw their unity from a common oppression by a more powerful state, but in essence they still address 'imagined communities'. What binds them together are those beliefs that their leaders wish to emphasize as much as any real bonds, ethnic or otherwise: 'Collective memory is usually very selective memory, as likely to be myth as reality. What people choose to remember depends on their current situations and aspirations. Ethnic identity is powerful, but it is neither inevitable nor eternal.'[1]

Some categorize 'ethnic nationalism' as purely destructive, atavistic and bloody – nationalisms, as one commentator put it, with the 'brutal face' of the murderer and the rapist. Others eulogize them – the small against the large, the powerless against the powerful, peasants against kings, David against Goliath. As usual, the truth lies somewhere in between.

Our opinions on this depend once again on our categorization into 'Us' and 'Them'. We like to think that 'we' are patriotic and 'they' are nationalistic. Or we divide nationalisms into Civic virtue and Ethnic vice. Yet the price of civic nationalism can often be the marginalization of ethnic minorities. And nationalism may also bring to the fore the best as well as the worst in people: 'In an age when it is so common for progressive cosmopolitan intellectuals to insist on the near-pathological character of nationalism, it is useful to remind ourselves that nations inspire love, and often profoundly self-sacrificing love.'[6]

So what then is all this sacrifice for? To what do the separatists, advocates of self-determination, actually aspire? The answer, more often than not, is a new country, with an independent state to crown their nation. And herein lies the supreme irony. For while separatists struggle and fight and die in order to carve out a country of their own, the 185 nation-states that already exist are growing weaker by the day.

A borderless world

The power of global capital in the form of transnational organizations and institutions has made a nonsense of national economic decision-making. Back in 1974, when Barnet and Muller wrote their classic study: *Global Reach; The Power of the Multinational Corporation*, they saw the writing on the wall: 'The men who run the global corporations are the first in history with the organization, technology, money and ideology to make a credible try at managing the world as an integrated economic unit...What they are demanding in essence is the right to transcend the nation-state and in the process to transform it.'[7]

DEFINITIONS

A **Nation** is a group of people from the same region of origin who share a common history. They probably share a similar culture and tradition and may speak the same language.

A **State** is the main political authority within a sharply defined territory. But it is an abstract idea since it is independent of rulers – who can be replaced – and of the people who live there. Its authority often rests on a written Constitution.

A **Nation-State** (which we also call a country) in theory assumes that everyone living there belongs to the same nation. In practice this is generally no longer the case. The nation-state forms the basis of international political divisions. There are currently 185 nation-states. At least 15 of these have been created since 1990.

Nationalism is the ideology which holds the nation and the state together. It takes many forms but often involves a semi-mystical attachment to the 'homeland'.

Today, this transformation is common wisdom. *Business Week* in 1990 quoted W Michael Blumental, Chair of Unisys Corporation, to the effect that world corporations are becoming 'stateless'. They move factories and labs 'around the world without particular reference to national borders'.[7]

Capital too is free to flow in and out of the country at the whim of international stock and currency markets. The amount of money that moves around the world in a single day is more than three times what a country like Japan earns through trade in an entire year. We live in what Japanese business guru Kenichi Ohmae calls 'a borderless world' where 'nation-states have become little more than bit actors'.[7] We talk of goods 'made in Britain' or 'made in Japan' or 'made in the US'. In fact, they are far more likely to have been made in Korea, assembled in Malaysia, sewn together in Taiwan and then shipped to the country where they are supposed to have been 'made'.

National governments have lost control over another crucial area of 'national' life – communications. Improved technology

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OR GET OUT

PAUL FUSCO / MAGNUM

The people march on – protesters at the Earth Summit in Rio demand a new internationalism.

means that it is no longer possible for nation-states to exert strict controls over the information their citizens receive. In former Yugoslavia, for instance, people from Croatia, forbidden to write or telephone their relatives in Serbia, have been using the Internet to pass messages. In India, satellite television has brought soap operas from around the world into the homes of millions of people.

But communications and the media are dominated by a global culture which is increasingly Americanized. American English is the global language and the US sells its own culture as 'global'. A young market trader in Manila aspires to the same kinds of things as a taxi-driver in Moscow or a college student in downtown Los Angeles – Levi jeans, Coca-Cola, Western music.

Yet at the same time other groups – social, political and ethnic – are rebelling against this homogenization. As Anthony Smith, author of a number of books on nationalism, explains, these groups are using the tools of mass communications to 'create and sustain their own... social or cultural networks in opposition both to the national state and to a wider continental or global culture.'[9]

Such networks are often formed as people try to wrest control from unresponsive governments. Everywhere, direct action – covered extensively by the media – is having results. Dam-building is halted by those prepared to risk their lives to save homes and livelihoods, road-building is stymied by dedicated environmentalists – and new countries are carved out by those who demand a separate national identity. New identities are being imagined.

Failure of the nation-state

The nation-state has failed its people – failed to provide affordable education and health services, failed to look after its citizens, failed even to make the impact on the world stage that those citizens expect. Perhaps its greatest failure is its chronic inability to allow its people the right to take part in the decisions which are important to them. Governments and those who run them are increasingly seen as useless, corrupt – or just very distant.

In the words of the UN's 1993 Human Development Report: 'The nation-state now is too small for the big things, and too big for the small.'[10]

So what of the future? What will eventually grow out of the tatters of the nation-state? The historian Eric Hobsbawm wrote in 1992 that: 'the world of the next century will be largely supranational... [and] will reflect the decline of the old nation-state as an operational entity.'[11] Others believe that the new entities of the twenty-first century will be based on small ethnic and tribal groupings.

There is no doubt that change is in the air. While we now seem to be ruled by an oppressive market – rather than an oppressive state – people are increasingly challenging both, and finding ways to shape their own lives. But global problems increasingly need global and not national solutions: 'Famines, ethnic conflicts, social disintegration, terrorism, pollution and drug trafficking can no longer be confined within national borders.'[10] The nation-state is being squeezed from above by the forces of international capital and from below by the demands of its own citizens.

Alternatives

There are options other than a world of global supranational capitalism or total fragmentation. Decentralization may be an alternative to separatism. And technology can be a tool for positive change – for those who can afford it. Links are being made beyond national boundaries. People in former Yugoslavia who are against Serbian aggression are using the new document which outlines the Constitution for a Scottish Parliament in order to establish the basis for their own kind of multi-ethnic state. Even in the United States: 'The great majority of Americans increasingly have more in common with their counterparts in other countries than with the putatively American wing of a global ruling class... Americans may begin looking past national boundaries for alliances, especially with those just beyond our borders, physical (Mexico, Canada), or psychic (Western Europe).'[12]

We are at present, as the poet Matthew Arnold put it, 'wandering between two worlds/ One dead, the other unable to be born'. We know the old world of nation-states is dying. We have a chance to assist in the birth of the new one, to give it shape beyond the parochialism of nation, ethnicity, race or class. Let us be secure enough in our own imagined communities to recognize the value of other peoples' imaginings. Let us take that chance to create a world that is based on democracy, decentralism and tolerance – a world where a new internationalism is a real possibility. ■

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1 *States of disarray: the social effects of globalization* (UNRISD 1995) **2** *Nations and Nationalism* Ernest Gellner (Basil Blackwell 1983) **3** *Imagined Communities* Benedict Anderson (Verso 1991) **4** *The Black Man's Burden: Africa and the curse of the nation-state* Basil Davidson (James Currey 1992) **5** *Banal Nationalism* Michael Billig (Sage 1995) **6** *Motherlands: Black women's writing from Africa, the Caribbean and South Asia* edited by Susheila Nasta (Women's Press 1991) **7** *When Corporations Rule the World* David C Korten (Earthscan 1995) **8** *The End of the Nation-state: The rise of regional economies* Kenichi Ohmae (Harper Collins 1995) **9** *Nations and Nationalism in a global era* Anthony D Smith (Polity Press 1995) **10** *Human Development reports 1993 and 1994* (United Nations Development Programme) **11** *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* Eric Hobsbawm (Cambridge University Press 1992) **12** Ellen Willis 'The postnational prospect' in *Village Voice*, Nov 28 1996 p 21.

ERICH HARTMANN / MAGNUM

This land is My land

IDENTITY CARD

Write down
I am an Arab
I am a name without a family name
I am patient in a country where everything
lives by the eruption of anger.
My roots
gripped down before time began
before the blossoming of ages
before cypress trees & olive trees
... before grass sprouted.
My father
is from the family of the plough
not from a noble line
& my grandfather
was a peasant
without nobility without genealogy!
& my house
is a crop-warden's shack
built of sticks and reeds.
Does my social status satisfy you?
I am a name without a family name.

Write down
I am an Arab.
You usurped my grandfather's vineyards
& the plot of land I used to plough
I & all my children
& you left us
& all my grandchildren
nothing but these rocks... so
your government
will it take them too as rumour has it?
So be it.
Write down at the top of the first page:
I do not hate people.
I steal from no-one.
However
if I am hungry
I will eat the flesh of my usurper.
Beware beware of my hunger
& of my anger.

MAHMOUD DARWISH

JEWS IN THE LAND OF ISRAEL

We keep forgetting where we came from.
Our Jewish names
From the Diaspora unmask us,
Evoking memories of flowers and fruits, medieval
cities, metals,
Knights who turned to stone, many roses
Perfumes evaporated long ago, precious stones, a lot
Of red, handiwork that vanished from the world
(The hands too).

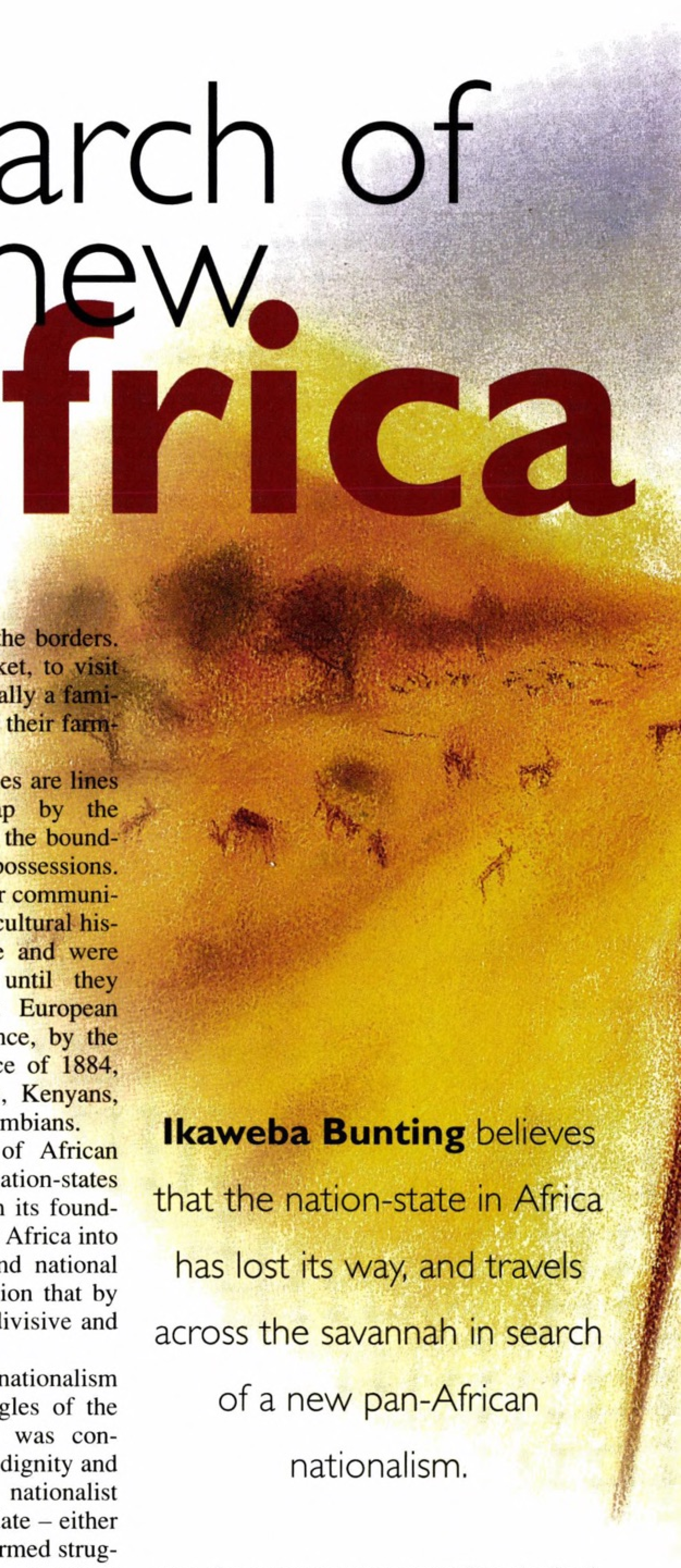
What are we doing here, returning with this pain.
The longings dried out with the swamps.
Our desert blooms and our children
are beautiful.
Even shards of ships that sank on the way,
Reached this shore,
Even winds did. Not all the sails.

What are we doing
In this dark land casting
Yellow shadows that slice our eyes?
(Sometimes, a person would say after forty
or fifty years: 'The sun is killing me'.)
What are we doing with our misty souls, our names,
Our forest eyes, our beautiful children,
Our swift blood?

Spilt blood is not roots of trees
But it is the closest to roots
Human beings have.

YEHUDA AMICHAI

In search of a new Africa



Ikaweba Bunting believes that the nation-state in Africa has lost its way, and travels across the savannah in search of a new pan-African nationalism.

On the way to Sinya there is a hill that you keep on your right as you head east. I call it the 'sacred hill of directions'. Past a small waterhole and an acacia tree and the hill shifts to your left until you reach a big Maasai *boma* (homestead). The route goes on from landmark to landmark until you finally reach the village. The open savannah is marked by cattle trails that disappear whenever a strong gust of wind stirs up the dust.

On this particular day a Tanzanian police officer who recognized me asked for a ride to the police post on the way. As we drove across the savannah we saw a herd of *swalla* (gazelles). My passenger asked me to turn the vehicle towards the animals so that he could hunt some. The police post is very remote and they often supplement their diet of maize and beans with game meat.

After driving around for some time with no success I decided that I must get on my way. It was then that I realized that I had forgotten to take note of any landmarks en route. I searched the horizon but could not see the hill I used for navigation. Being midday, it was also difficult to use the sun to figure out direction. I had a feeling that we were no longer in Tanzania but had crossed the border into Kenya. My companion, however, insisted that we were still in Tanzania.

As we drove zigzagging around, a young Maasai *moran* (warrior) appeared, striding across the plains with his spear over his shoulder. When we told him we were on our way to Sinya, he smiled and told us we had lost the way some distance. I asked him if we were in Kenya or Tanzania. He looked at me and then at my companion and asked: 'Why? Are you Kenyans or Tanzanians?' We replied: 'Tanzanian'. The young man then said with a laugh and a sidelong glance at the police officer: 'You are in Tanzania but you are lost!'

It is only by chance that we are called Tanzanians, Kenyans, Senegalese, Zimbabweans or Zambians

When we finally got back on track I located my sacred hill of directions. I was still convinced that we had been at least three kilometres inside Kenya. It eventually dawned on me that the young *moran* and the police officer had known all along where we were. But it made no difference to them which country we were in; whether we were on one side or the other of an imaginary line.

This story illustrates the absurdities of the nation-state in Africa. Most of the time ordinary people simply ignore the borders. They cross them to go to market, to visit relatives and to work. Occasionally a family's home is in one country and their farmland in another.

The borders between countries are lines that were drawn on a map by the Europeans in order to establish the boundaries of their various colonial possessions. Most borders divided families or communities that shared the same socio-cultural history, spoke the same language and were often socio-political entities until they became subjects of different European monarchies. It is only by chance, by the legacy of the Berlin Conference of 1884, that we are called Tanzanians, Kenyans, Senegalese, Zimbabweans or Zambians.

In 1963 the Organization of African Unity (OAU) established nation-states based on colonial boundaries in its founding charter. This locked the new Africa into the task of building nations and national identities on a colonial foundation that by its very nature was inherently divisive and contradictory.

Then came the anti-colonial nationalism of the African liberation struggles of the 1950s and 1960s which was concerned with human rights, dignity and self-determination. The nationalist leaders were given a mandate – either by vote or by support for armed struggle and civil disobedience – to secure a situation that would restore cultural, social and economic freedom.

On those glorious nights at the midnight hour the various imperial representatives from Europe hauled down the flags of Britain, France or wherever, and presided over the raising of the flags of new African states. On those evenings football stadiums and meeting-grounds were filled beyond capacity with all the people waiting to experience the collective catharsis of *uhuru* (freedom).

During colonial rule the people and the leaders had struggled together as one. But once the ceremony was complete the leaders went with the colonial dignitaries to the Governor's mansion to celebrate. They drank champagne and danced to European music. Meanwhile, the masses remained in the stadium, drank local brew, played drums, and sang the songs and rhythms that they and their ancestors had sung for centuries.

Those nights were an omen, an early warning of what the future would become. On the one hand there were those people and organizations that advocated remaining part of the colonial empire with an élite sharing the privileges of their colonial mas-

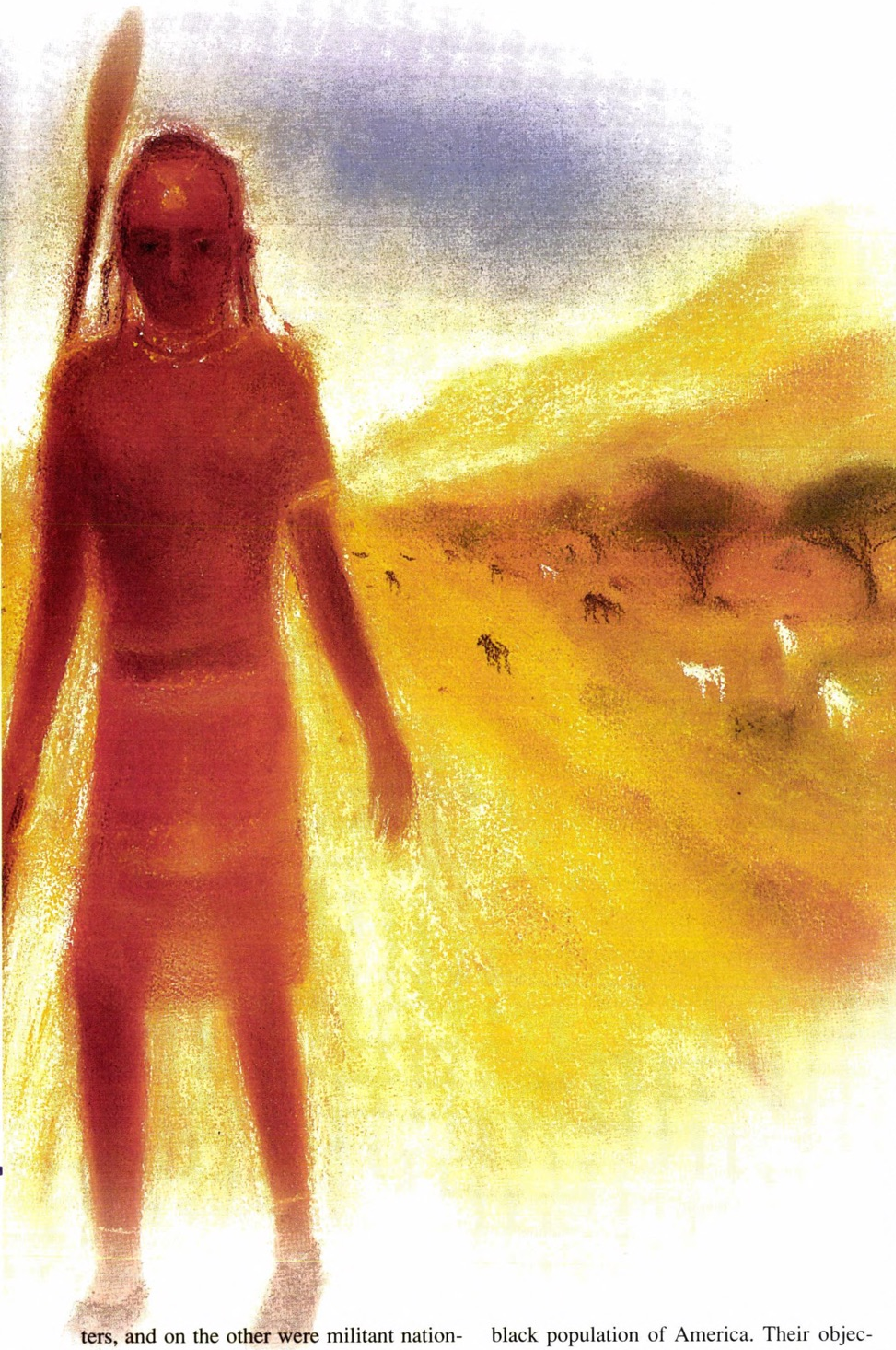


ILLUSTRATION BY LIZ PYLE

ters, and on the other were militant nationalists who advocated sentiments of separation, self-determination and independence.

This dichotomy was not just confined to Africa; in the United States there was a growing social movement which also had two strands – a conservative integrationist philosophy and a Black Nationalist movement which expressed solidarity with African liberation struggles and anti-imperialist struggles throughout the world. Some black nationalists believed the solution to lie in a national homeland in the southern states of America; others proposed a return to Africa for part of the black population of America. Their objective was to build a pan-African movement which would be able to demand that the US and Europe respect the human and civil rights of black people.

The failure of the integrationists to become a successful part of mainstream America has spawned an adapted black nationalism which has sought to control local community economics, social services and politics without breaking from or revolting against capitalism and the dominant national power structure.

I used to describe myself as a 'revolutionary pan-African Nationalist'. I thought that a strong socialist state was an absolute necessity for African freedom. Further, I believed that a union of those strong socialist states, a United States of Africa, was essential for the freedom and prosperity for all African peoples worldwide.

I no longer think the nation-state in Africa is viable – economically, politically or culturally.

My belief and hope that the post-colonial African nation could become a liberating institution for African people has been sobered by the reality of dependency. Today, finance and economic policy are controlled and managed directly by the World Bank and the IMF. Political parties, governments and leaders in Africa solicit Western support in order to secure a power-base.

The international creditors control all the assets. The workers and peasants toil and sweat to service debts owed to the international bankers and multilateral agencies. So-called national budgets in many countries are more than 50-per-cent dependent on external financing. Development budgets are at least 90-per-cent dependent on donor funding. In other words, the African state is in receivership and cannot operate unless it gets money to do so from Western donors and financiers.

In Africa today only the symbols of sovereignty exist. There are flags, seats on the UN General Assembly, heads of state (sometimes more than one), armies, national currencies, ambassadors and Mercedes Benzes.

The chain that imprisons African governments and consequently African people in this disempowering relationship is 'developmentalism'. Developmentalism is the ideology that believes the state is responsible for organizing society in such a way as to accelerate its progress into a free-market industrial society. This includes a parliament, a stock exchange, shopping malls, highways, automobile factories, pollution and increased crime. The idea of development is married to the idea of the nation-state. It is no wonder that the nation-state in Africa, having failed to replicate the Western socio-economic saga, is crumbling.

After 30 years I think African leaders, politicians, and business people, together with the international community, have a moral obligation to come to terms with the fundamental mistake that was made. Millions of men, women and children have withstood repression, torture, deprivation, suffering and death in uprisings, civil wars, border disputes and coups all in the name of nation-building and developing African states in the image and likeness of the industrialized Northern nations. It is too high a price to pay.

That said, does the failure and collapse of the nation-state (in Somalia, Liberia, Zaire and Rwanda) and the general failure of national development plans throughout the continent also mean the end of Pan-African nationalism?

I think not. I think there can still be a Pan-African unity – but of peoples not of states. This unity already exists in its potential form in the customs and cultures of the people, though the institutions and rulers of those nation-states keep the people divided and exploitable. Just as they were in colonial times.

Pan-Africanism is undergoing a resurgence in Africa, America, Latin America and Europe. Young people are exposed to popular culture that synthesizes African, African-American and Caribbean experiences. Many young Africans are travelling and experiencing racism in Europe and America. Emerging from these shared experiences and global communications is a global consciousness of African political and cultural solidarity that transcends the concept of the nation-state.

Transnational Pan-African solidarity is what can liberate Africa from the scourge and burden of perpetual 'Developing Nationhood'. The new Africa must be able to accommodate multiculturalism and the global reality of the twenty-first century. It must be able to create an environment that enables indigenous communities in villages and small towns to run their own affairs, control their own resources and benefit directly from the products of their own labour; and determine their own agenda for prosperity and peace.

Countries like Rwanda have a chance to lead the way, to do something different. That chance has been paid for in too much blood and suffering to be wasted in rebuilding the same structures that precipitated the implosion of the nation-state on its citizens in the first place.

So what will rise out of the ashes of the post-colonial nation-state in Africa? For an answer let us emulate the attitude and adaptability of the young Maasai who gave me directions to Sinya. If you need to go someplace it doesn't matter what nation-state you claim as identity or which border there is to cross. The object of a journey is to get where you are going. The object of anti-imperialist nationalism and Pan-Africanism was not the nation-state but rather justice, equality, dignity, prosperity and freedom from domination.

We have lost the way and it is time to find our bearings, to relocate the 'sacred hill of directions' and get back on track. This would be the living tribute to those millions of African people who perished or are suffering in the name of nation-building and development. ■

Ikaweba Bunting lives in East Africa, is employed by Oxfam as a Regional Communications Officer and works for the empowerment of African people.

Ruslan's wa

He was standing in front of a wall of flame, defiantly silent as bombs incinerated the centre of Grozny. A machine-gun in his hands, a large Chechen dagger strapped to his arm. Across his forehead the green headband of the *smertniki*, warriors who would fight to the death for Allah and their country.

Ruslan was 13 years old when he ran away from home to battle against the Russians who had invaded the separatist Chechen republic in December 1994. He had no plans for the future, only for the next skirmish.

'We have a small country so everyone must fight,' he said in a husky, unbroken voice. 'If they kill us, it's better than living as victims.'

A month later Ruslan died, leading a grenade attack on a Russian tank. But for his enemies he and others like him remain a symbol of menace, the incarnation of a fierce unquenchable nationalism that cen-

JEREMY NICHOLL / KATZ

Fighting to the death: Ruslan, Chechnya's youngest combatant.

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As the might of Russia's 'Great Power' nationalism faces Chechen determination, **Olivia Ward** explains how centuries of bloodshed have led to an impossible deadlock.

turies of Russian repression could not erase.

While Chechen guerrillas resisted Russia's attempts to force them back into its fold, inside the huge Russian Federation another kind of nationalism was swelling. Its rallying cry was the glory of the old empire, the pride of a fallen superpower struggling to be reborn. It appealed not to people under siege from tanks and bombs, but to those reeling from the chaos that overtook them when seven decades of cradle-to-grave socialism gave way to survival of the fittest.

This harking back is not new in Russian history, where for centuries 'times of trouble' have bred chauvinism and xenophobia. Today as in the past nationalism appeals to the person on the street, and even more so to the one in the gutter. 'I talk to people on their own level,' says Vladimir Zhirinovsky, the bellowing ultra-nationalist whose ideas range from dizzy to dangerous. 'I don't use long words and theories. I tell them what they want to hear.'

The average *muzhik* – a Russian bumpkin – finds soothing words in Zhirinovsky's speeches and those of other extremists. To disenfranchised people like retired bus driver Dima Yushekov, living alone in his peeling Moscow tenement, personal status or self-esteem are abstract concepts. He can take pride only in his country's glory. When Yushekov hears a politician delivering a message which identifies him with Russia's shattered splendour is music to his ears.

It's not surprising that the phrase most often on confused people's lips is 'law and order'. Nationalists, politicians and even those who claim to be democrats, find it convenient to blame Russia's ethnic minorities, especially Caucasians, for the escalating lawlessness that has accompanied the arrival of the market economy.

In Moscow and other big cities, raids on Caucasian- and Central Asian-run markets were popular with shoppers at election time. Seeing vendors beaten and arrested on charges of price-boosting reassured them that in an out-of-control world, something could be done to defend their interests. Better still, by wiping out 'foreign' influences, the myths of a pure Russia could be restored.

The reborn Communist Party's promise that Russia would once again sit at the head of a restored Soviet Union attracted more supporters in last December's parliamentary elections than those of neofascists interested only in the bashing of non-Russian heads. The most popular extremist party, headed by Vladimir Zhirinovsky, lost a dozen seats in the State Duma, while avowed neo-Nazis all but disappeared.

'Great Power' nationalism never really died in Russia in spite of the fall of the Soviet Union. Like the Communists, it was always waiting in the wings for a new day. The struggle that followed Chechnya's 1991 declaration of independence fanned its flames, not because the majority of Russians supported the new military adventure in the Caucasus, but because politicians so adeptly played on Russia's insecurity and shaky sense of identity to warn that the giant multi-national federation could crumble.

Chechnya had developed its own patriotism over centuries of rugged and spartan life in the mountainous republic. With a land mass smaller than Northern Ireland, its population at its height reached only one million – less than one per cent of Russia's 148 million. Cut off from the expansionist north by the spiky Caucasus Mountains, the Chechens were able to form a tightly knit tribal society whose religion combined paganism, the Arab-based traditions of Islam and a militaristic code of self-defence. A martial as well as agricultural society, their tribal blood feuds sometimes lasted one hundred years.

Ironically, it was Russia that united the scrapping society by providing common cause against the enemy. In the seventeenth century the first Russians to brave the mountain barrier were pioneering Cossacks looking for new land. But soon the Tsars took up the cry, expecting an easy conquest, to prepare a corridor to the riches of south and central Asia.

> ***Today as in the past nationalism appeals to the person on the street, and even more to the one in the gutter***

They were to be disappointed. By the early 1820s the struggle had become bloody as well as bitter. Imam Shamil, a legendary Muslim warrior and religious leader, attracted fierce loyalty and instilled a new variety of military Islam, *muridism*, which was to become part of Chechnya's identity. Spurred on by his followers, the imposing Shamil declared a *ghazevat*, or holy war, to defend his Caucasian brand of democracy, which held that that all believers were equal under Allah.

Today in the Dagestan capital of Makhachkala, a museum pays tribute to his 30-year struggle, featuring portraits of the mountain fighters beheading and disembowelling hapless Russian troops.

It is a warning Russia was to ignore at the end of the twentieth century. Ruslan, packing his pockets with grenades, is an incarnation of the Murid warriors who willingly died for their land and beliefs.

After Shamil was taken prisoner, revolts continued for decades, infuriating Russian royalists and Bolsheviks alike. In February

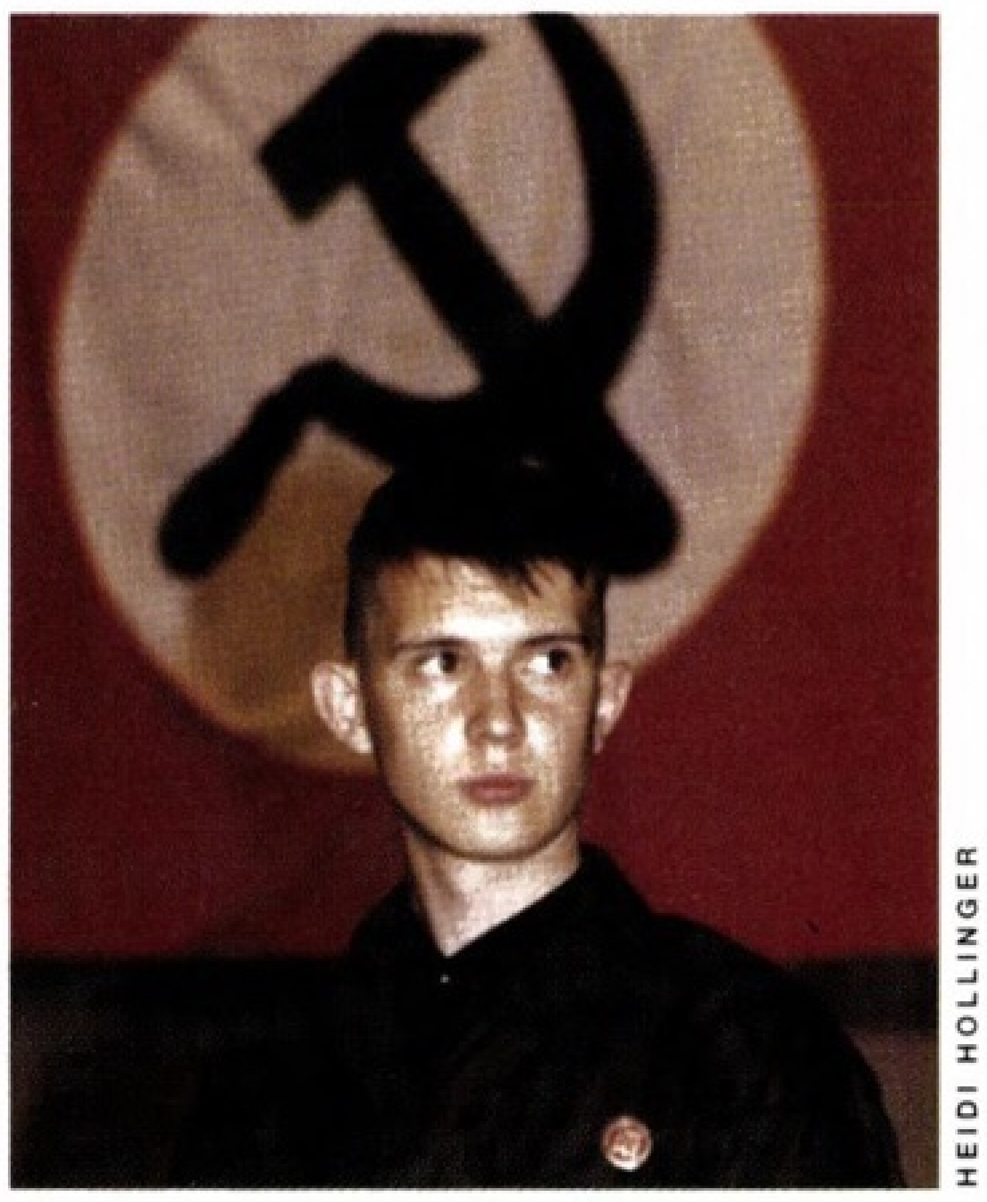
1944, Stalin ordered the entire population of Chechnya, along with their Caucasian neighbours, to be rounded up and deported in a genocidal gesture that killed half of the displaced people. It was not until Stalin died in 1953 that the survivors returned to their homeland – still defiant and without official permission.

'There's nobody in my generation who wasn't born in exile,' says Opti, an engineer in his late forties. 'That's made us tougher and more determined because we'll never let it happen again.'

In 1944, Stalin ordered the population of Chechnya to be rounded up and deported in a genocidal gesture that killed half of the displaced people

The war in Chechnya this time began after President Dzhokar Dudayev, a flamboyant Soviet bomber pilot, slipped off Moscow's leash and declared independence. He chose his moment well. In 1991, Russia was dizzy with its own kind of freedom following the end of communism. In a speech he would later regret, Boris Yeltsin told the Russian regions to 'take all the independence you can swallow'.

Yeltsin soon decided Dudayev had gone too far. But it was not until 1994 that simmering tensions came to the boil. For Dudayev, independence was a calculated risk that had paid off in profitable but illegal businesses. Russia imposed economic sanctions that hurt poorer Chechens but were only a joke to the profiteers, as Dudayev formed lucrative trade links with near-eastern countries and former Soviet Republics eager to use this new transit point for the shipment of arms and drugs.


HEIDI HOLLINGER

Reviving 'Great Power' nationalism – a member of the right-wing Russian National Unity party.

'How do we do business without a banking system?' chuckled a former financial official on the eve of war. 'Easy. We carry bags of cash.'

As the war progressed, many separatists loyal to Dudayev gravitated to his field commanders and a minority of exhausted civilians opted for politicians who had been ousted by the Chechen leader. The splits were aggravated by a Moscow-imposed leadership election last December. Although journalists reported that few people turned out to vote, Russia declared its single candidate, Doku Zavgayev, the new legitimate President, officially deposing Dudayev.

Holed up in mountain hideaways, the resilient Dudayev remains a figurehead for separatists whose defiance of Moscow increased after the election. For them, independence is the only acceptable solution to the long and bloody conflict. Most say they are confident that Chechnya can and must go it alone, but after living as regional pariahs for three years, even they are cautious about claiming total economic independence.

The coolest heads among the separatists visualize an economic union with Russia, but on a partnership basis, not as a colonial subject. 'We can't pretend we are an island in the middle of nowhere, and we can't do business without partners,' said a former economics ministry official.

Some form of business accord is more vital than ever, both for Chechnya and Russia.

Russian estimates say that re-starting Chechnya's oil refineries and putting the pipeline into use would bring in a billion dollars a year – a sum that could gradually put the battered territory back on its feet even if the proceeds had to be shared with Moscow.

For the average person in Chechnya, it would mean little unless there was a government with the will to pay wages and rebuild the country's bomb-blasted housing, health-care and welfare systems.

And unless Russia finds a way to retreat from the ideas of empire that have scattered the bones of its soldiers over the Caucasian fields throughout the centuries, it would mean nothing at all.

In a small grave outside his desolate home village lies Ruslan's body. His family visit the grave, but they do not weep. 'When your heart and everything inside you is burning like fire, you don't pour water on it,' says another villager who lost her father and brother in the war. 'You quench the fire with the blood of your enemy.' ■

Olivia Ward is bureau chief of the *Toronto Star* in Moscow.

Just what is it with colonized countries? What exactly is it that makes them lick boots, embrace the dominant hegemony, trivialize their history, caricature their culture and prostitute themselves throughout the too-brief summer months in a desperate attempt to take back some cash from their erstwhile marauders and pillagers, now known as tourists, who fly or drive into their country to stare and to admire and to wander in these vast and empty spaces? Well might you wonder.

And already you have identified me: that outdated, parochial phenomenon, the Angry Scot. A chip on her shoulder, the result perhaps of a *Braveheart* or a *Rob Roy* movie, or a rare Nationalist by-election victory, or glimpses of Northern Ireland self-determination. Oh how she oversimplifies her history. We have all surely moved through and beyond the sullen sulkings of province-led politics to the Broader Picture. The World View.

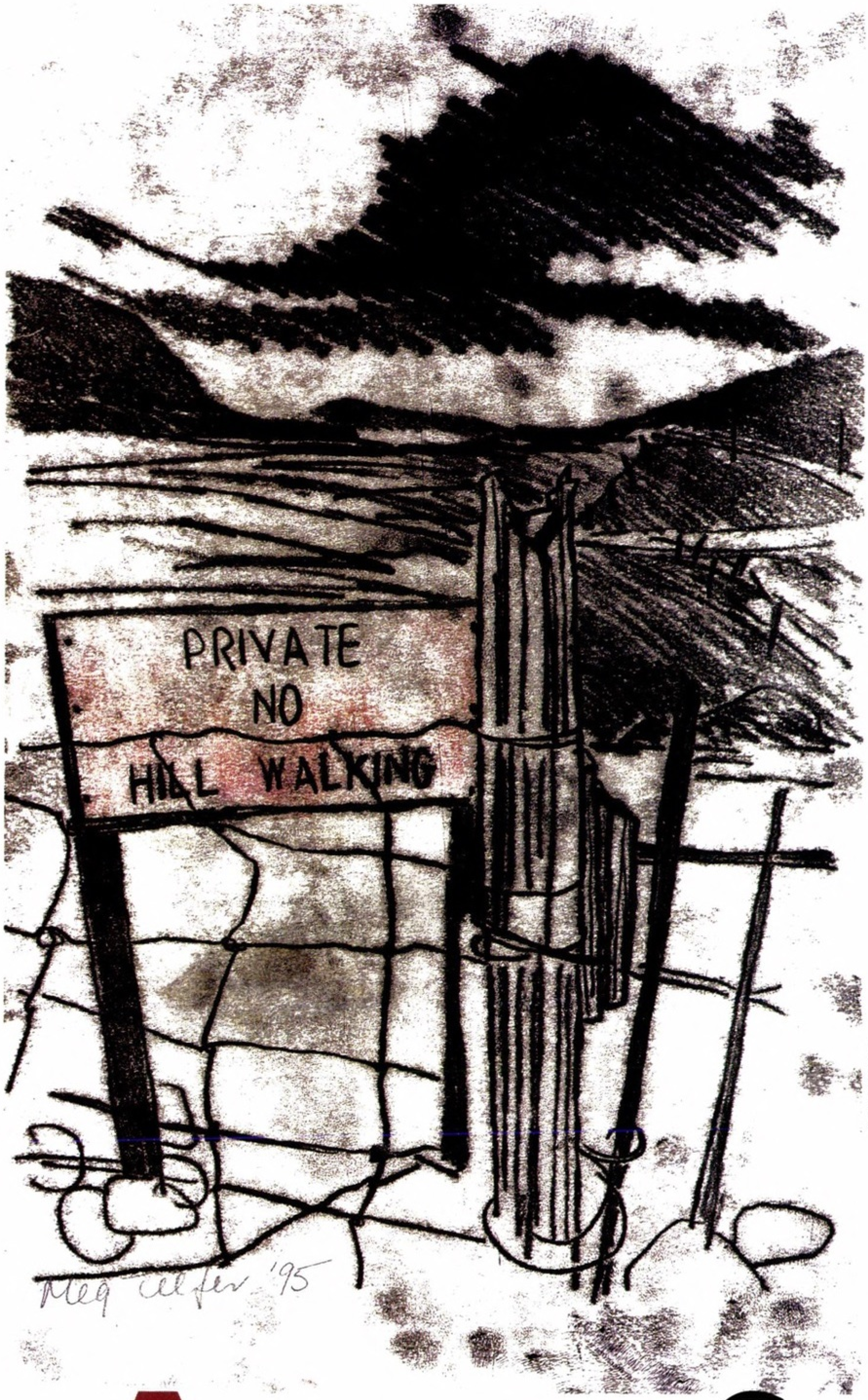
But indulge me. Because there are an awful lot of non-Scots who own an awful lot of Scotland. My Scottish education, excellent in so many respects, failed to teach me a memorable piece of Scottish history which could explain this phenomenon (although we got English kings and queens and Turnip Townshend) and so we were left to draw our own conclusions from the world we saw around us. Impressions gleaned in childhood and reinforced in adolescence cling like limpets into adulthood despite valiant efforts to shake them off. Some might claim they are not altogether inaccurate, all the time. This is how it happened.

In the early 1970s our classroom numbers were swollen with American kids whose fathers were overseeing the arrival of the oil-rig construction site at Nigg in Ross-shire in the Highlands. Heady days. The kids had names like Chip or Jon (without an 'h') or Pippa or Kaare, and I and my less brash pals pressed ourselves against the school corridor wall as these tall, tanned gods and goddesses strode through our lives. Many of us wept aloud as they moved on to colonize another land hungry for investment, the closest to Donny Osmond we were likely to get back in the 1970s in the Highlands of Scotland.

Th

Then there was the aluminium smelter at Invergordon (long since closed), which also brought incomers, most of them English, who similarly took over or so it seemed.

We were in awe because they spoke with the same accents as the newsreaders on the BBC, and they answered back to the teachers and didn't return to the school until September because they adhered to



MEG TELFER

e **Angry** Scot

English school holidays despite being in Scotland – like going abroad and still eating fish and chips.

Of course now I know that we just didn't mind or notice the quiet ones, but back then I learned only one description. This came from my quiet and unassuming mother who bore ill-will against no living soul save those whom she dismissed half-nervously and half-contemptuously as 'loud and American' or 'loud and English'. Never just the nationality, always loud. Is prejudice born of envy?

So forgive me. I've been abroad for the past four years and just got home a few months ago. Yes, it's great to be back. Sorry? Oh, in England. South of England. These past four years. When I first got back my accent was so dented that I was asked if I was enjoying my holiday in the Highlands! But it's back now, the flat vowels and the slightly rolling 'r' and is as welcome as the clean and bracing gales of winter and the sweeping grandeur of mountains and moors in this north-west corner of Sutherland.

So thank you, England, for awakening a desire to know more about my country. Not the details of kings and queens this time but the causes of the empty glens and straths, legacy of the Clearances which are soon to be fossilized in sterile and politically vacuous 'Heritage Trails': on the system of land ownership which results in empty moorland behind my house, owned by an English estate and a Danish Count and leased to the affluent for shooting and fishing. And then there are the empty properties, charming and picturesque holiday homes if you are on holiday, second homes if you are rich, an outrage if you're homeless in the Highlands and many are.

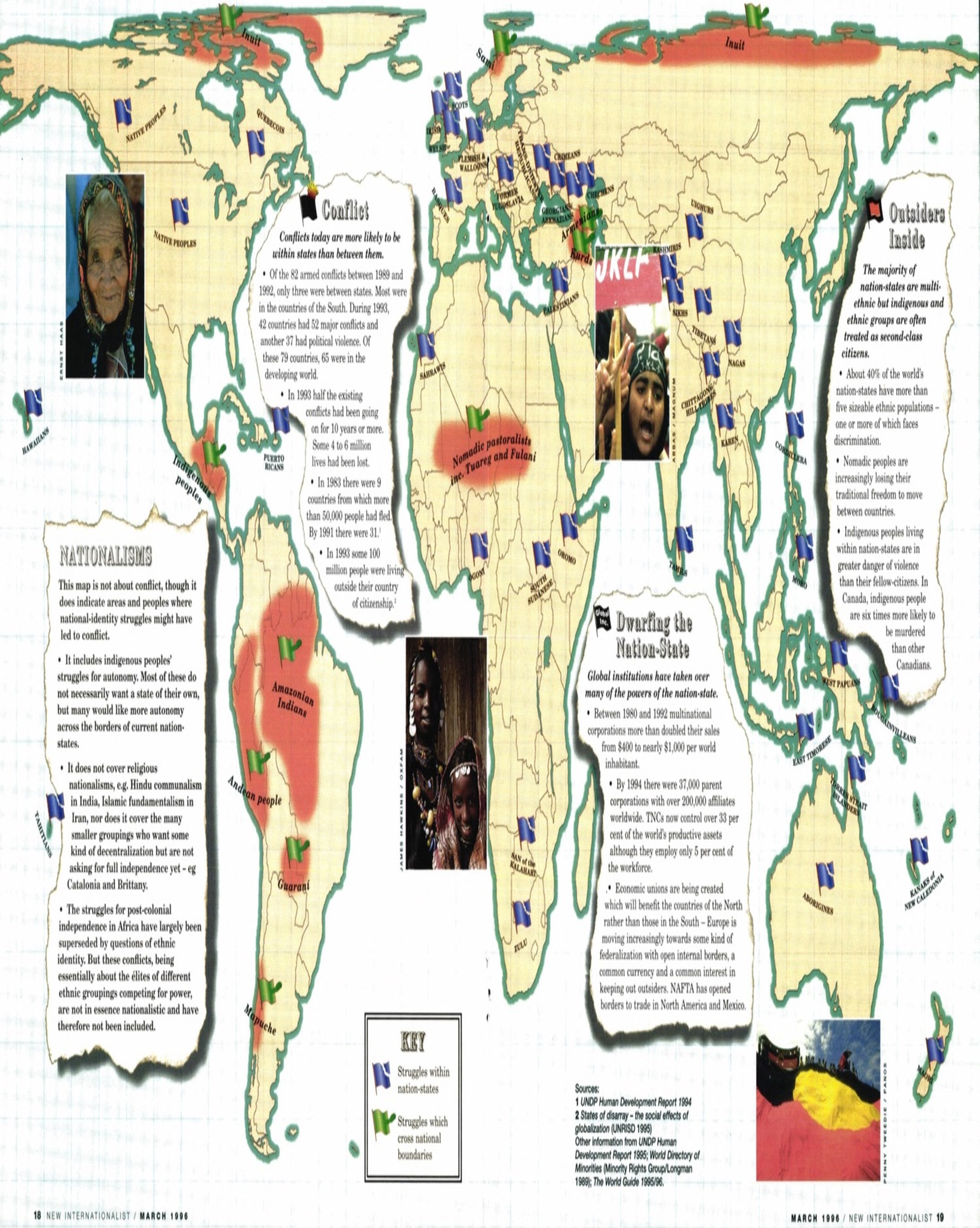
Every now and then a small but angry (and as yet ineffectual) anti-English anti-incomer group issues statements to the press threatening indiscriminate attacks and petrol bombings of non-Scots-owned properties. It doesn't happen, which is just as well as it could raze most of this corner of Scotland to the ground and wreck the next tourist season; which would be a shame, because becoming a theme park, a gross caricature of ourselves, is surely Scotland's biggest growth industry.

I will learn to love them, the tourists and the incomers. I will give thanks that a fragile economy is boosted annually by sales of Bed and Breakfast, bar suppers, petrol and postcards. I will rejoice that formerly thriving communities are 'revitalized' as old properties are bought up and schools are kept open by people from down south who only want a better way of life, and that it surely is.

But lurking among the logic and the facts the pangs remain. They are the same pangs that can be felt wandering through the woods at Culloden, or in the long-deserted pre-clearance villages in Strathnaver and Kildonan. It is a sorrow in the blood that has been there for too many centuries, an ancient Celtic melancholy that is pathetically easy to mock, and impossible to define; it is an impotent statelessness, an embarrassed silence. It is the lump in the throat, hastily swallowed, at the sound of a pibroch. It is love of a land that is strewn with 'PRIVATE - KEEP OUT' notices. It is the rage at the 'loud and English' voice shouting at me, 'Keep oaf may lend' as I amble across a moor near Loch Broom and pass a pristine whitewashed cottage. Once out of sight I scratch 'Give Scotland back to the Scots' with a biro on her fence post. It is wave upon wave of a Scottish consciousness and it's high time I got over it. Wouldn't you say? ■

Alison Napier is a Scottish freelance writer living and working in Northern Scotland.

FACTS - THE STATE OF NATIONS


Inuit
Sami
Inuit
NATIVE PEOPLES
QUEBECOIS
NATIVE PEOPLES
HAWAIIANS
Indigenous peoples
PUERTO RICANS
SCOTS
IRISH
WELSH
FLEMISH & WALLOONS
BASQUES
FORMER YUGOSLAVIA
TRANS-DNIESTER REPUBLICANS
CRIMEANS
CHECHENS
GEORGIANS ABKHAZIANS
Armenians
Kurds
PALESTINIANS
UIGHURS
KASHMIRIS
SIKHS
TIBETANS
NAGAS
CHITTAGONG HILL TRIBES
KAREN
CORDILLERA
TAMILS
MORO
SAHRAWIS
Nomadic pastoralists inc. Tuareg and Fulani
OGONI
OROMO
SOUTH SUDANESE
SAN of the KALAHARI
ZULU
Amazonian Indians
Andean people
Guarani
Mapuche
TAHITIANS
WEST PAPUANS
BOUGAINVILLEANS
EAST TIMORESE
TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS
ABORIGINES
KANAKS of NEW CALEDONIA
MAORI
JKLF
KEY
Struggles within nation-states
Struggles which cross national boundaries

ERNST HAAS

ABBAS / MAGNUM

JAMES HAWKINS / OXFAM

PENNY TWEEDIE / PANOS

NATIONALISMS

This map is not about conflict, though it does indicate areas and peoples where national-identity struggles might have led to conflict.

- **It includes indigenous peoples' struggles for autonomy. Most of these do not necessarily want a state of their own, but many would like more autonomy across the borders of current nation-states.**
- **It does not cover religious nationalisms, e.g. Hindu communalism in India, Islamic fundamentalism in Iran, nor does it cover the many smaller groupings who want some kind of decentralization but are not asking for full independence yet – eg Catalonia and Brittany.**
- **The struggles for post-colonial independence in Africa have largely been superseded by questions of ethnic identity. But these conflicts, being essentially about the élites of different ethnic groupings competing for power, are not in essence nationalistic and have therefore not been included.**

Conflict

Conflicts today are more likely to be within states than between them.

- Of the 82 armed conflicts between 1989 and 1992, only three were between states. Most were in the countries of the South. During 1993, 42 countries had 52 major conflicts and another 37 had political violence. Of these 79 countries, 65 were in the developing world.
- In 1993 half the existing conflicts had been going on for 10 years or more. Some 4 to 6 million lives had been lost.
- In 1983 there were 9 countries from which more than 50,000 people had fled. By 1991 there were 31.[1]
- In 1993 some 100 million people were living outside their country of citizenship.[2]

Dwarfing the Nation-State

Global institutions have taken over many of the powers of the nation-state.

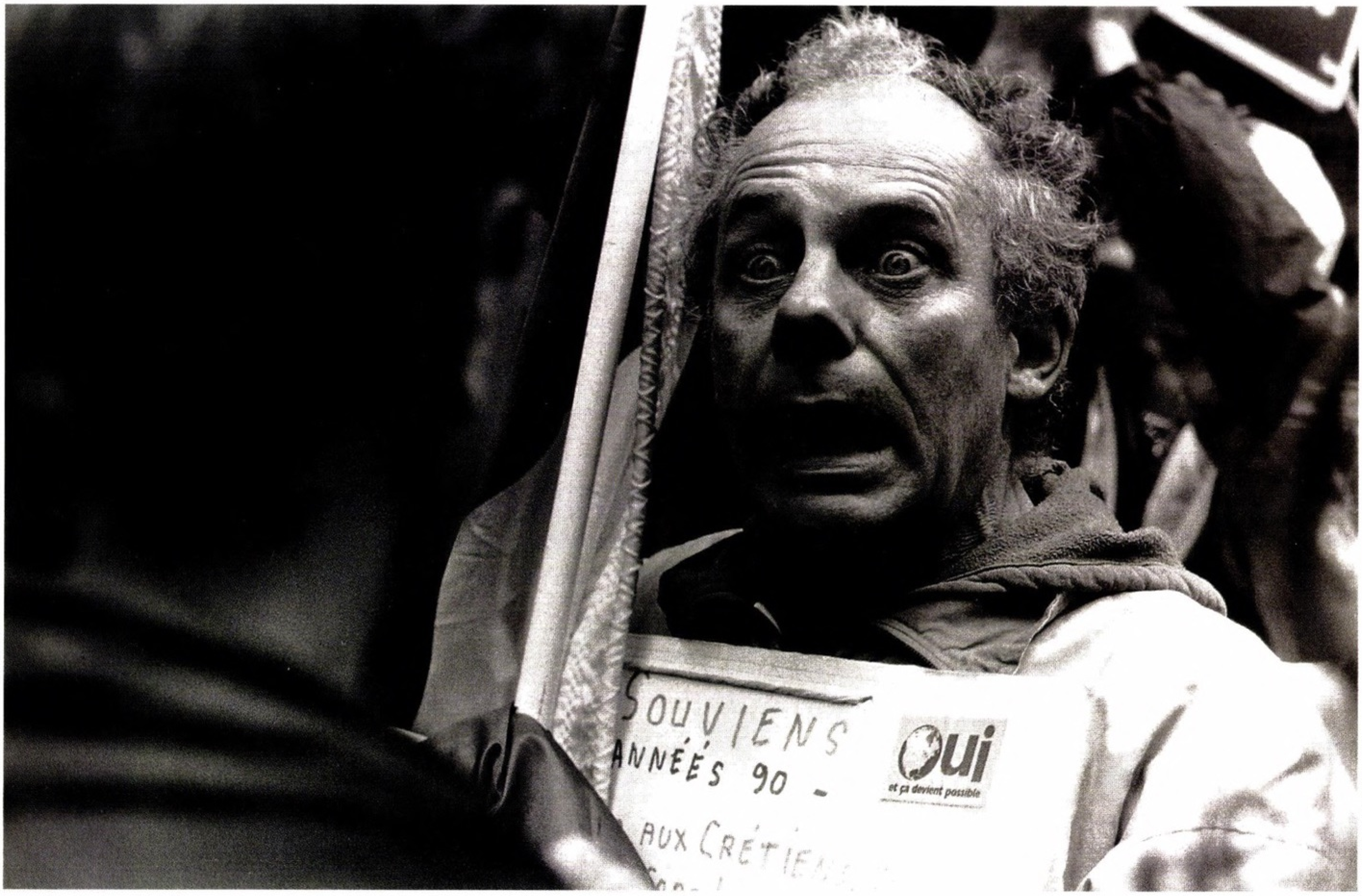
- Between 1980 and 1992 multinational corporations more than doubled their sales from $400 to nearly $1,000 per world inhabitant.
- By 1994 there were 37,000 parent corporations with over 200,000 affiliates worldwide. TNCs now control over 33 per cent of the world's productive assets although they employ only 5 per cent of the workforce.
- Economic unions are being created which will benefit the countries of the North rather than those in the South – Europe is moving increasingly towards some kind of federalization with open internal borders, a common currency and a common interest in keeping out outsiders. NAFTA has opened borders to trade in North America and Mexico.

Outsiders Inside

The majority of nation-states are multi-ethnic but indigenous and ethnic groups are often treated as second-class citizens.

- About 40% of the world's nation-states have more than five sizeable ethnic populations – one or more of which faces discrimination.
- Nomadic peoples are increasingly losing their traditional freedom to move between countries.
- Indigenous peoples living within nation-states are in greater danger of violence than their fellow-citizens. In Canada, indigenous people are six times more likely to be murdered than other Canadians.

Sources:
1 *UNDP Human Development Report 1994*
2 *States of disarray – the social effects of globalization* (UNRISD 1995)
Other information from *UNDP Human Development Report 1995*; *World Directory of Minorities* (Minority Rights Group/Longman 1989); *The World Guide 1995/96.*



ROBERT DEL TREDICI

In your face and on your placard – a 'yes' voter expresses his horror at the views of the 'no' side.

Spitting in the soup

Richard Swift muses on how Quebec separatism raises fundamental questions about the relationship between nation and state.

By early October 1995 Quebec was starting to heat up. In Toronto all the talk in coffee shops or clinic waiting rooms was of the impending referendum. Even the profoundly apolitical in Anglo-Canada were plunged unwillingly from business-as-usual to anger and frustration over the resurfacing of that ancient Canadian question: 'What does Quebec really want?' Nationalism was lighting emotional fuses once again. My Italian butcher muttered to me darkly that 'there would be trouble' if the 'Oui' won.

But the social fire seemed to have gone out of the separatist side. Twenty years ago sovereignty seemed all about doing things differently in Quebec – power to workers and communities to decide their own fates. Now, after several terms of Parti Québecois provincial government, it seemed more about cushy jobs and ambassadorships for the Quebec political class and their relatives.

Today the 'Oui' pitch has more to do with a manipulated sense of national grievance. A call for social justice was being replaced by those vague but cherished values of reactionary nationalism everywhere – honour and destiny.

The questions that October's referendum posed about nationalism have a lot to do with the relationship of state and nation in the modern era. Does a nation need a state in order to fulfil itself? There are examples both ways. The former Yugoslavia and USSR have witnessed an often-bloody break-up into a series of ethnically rooted mini-states.

But there are other options. Many in Europe hope that Basque, Walloon, Catalan and other nationalist aspirations can be accommodated in a re-arrangement where the centralized nation-state has been significantly weakened with powers devolved downwards to regional government and upwards to a Europe-wide authority. If one of the reasons a nation needs a state is to save it from domination by a centralized but alien government then diluting the power of such governments may provide the space for nations to define themselves without resort to an elusive political sovereignty. Sovereignty itself is often a mere figleaf in an age where the forces of global capital dictate so much of public policy.

Is a Quebec state whose power is hemmed in by international creditors and foreign-exchange dealers any longer an effective vehicle for national aspirations? Will it allow Quebec to do things differently? It seems that neither the Ottawa-based national government nor any of the Canadian provincial governments is capable these days of delivering the goods. The large (49.4 per cent) 'yes' vote from Quebec is at least partially due to the weakening of federal social programs like Unemployment Insurance and Old Age Pensions.

The incapacity of the Canadian state to guarantee the welfare of the nation has led to the rise of regionalist political loyalties. The right-wing Reform Party now dominates Western Canada and the Sovereigntists are the main voice in Quebec. Québecois who lack the Anglo taste for 'letting the market decide' have become particularly disenchanted. Yet it is unclear that an independent Quebec state would have any more ability to deliver the goods than the federal state it would displace. If anything the outside pressures on Quebec would increase to prove it was 'responsible' (debt reduction targets, cutbacks, no tax increases, weakened labour laws and deregulation) in its economic policies. The fiscal squeeze would be even tighter.

Québecois nationalism, like most other nationalisms, has two souls. There is the old cultural nationalism with its slogan of *la pure laine* (the pure wool) – an ethnocentric calling to the original white French Québecois (about 82 per cent of the population) who settled here more than two centuries ago. The other soul is a more progressive anti-imperialist nationalism rooted in the trade unions, community groups and women's organizations. These groups see independence as a chance to break with the more predatory forms of North American capitalism in a socially-oriented Quebec.

The ethnocentric exclusionary nationalism has created the most tensions, alienating the immigrant Montreal Allophones (Québecois parlance for immigrants whose native language is neither French nor English) and the native populations scattered around the province, particularly the militant Cree in the North. Sometimes this takes the form of overt racism such as the attacks on native people at the time of the militant land dispute at Oka a couple of years ago – or more recently the graffiti sprayed on Anglophone and Allophone businesses in Montreal. More often it is simply an assumption that such groups are not really Québecois and that their

Outsider

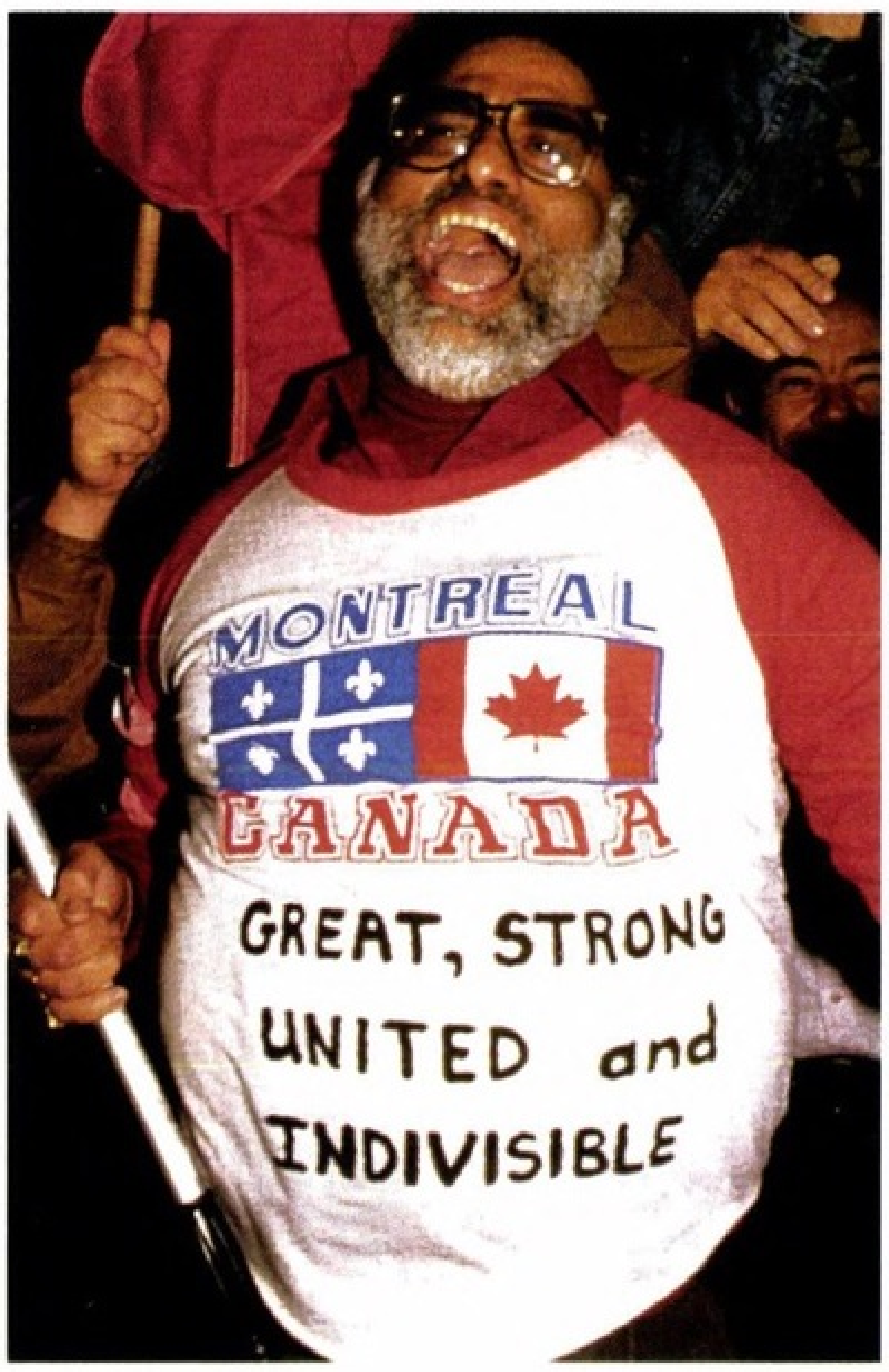
Leslie de Freitas and her friends feel excluded from Quebec's brand of nationalism.

For fifteen years I have watched the thousands march by my apartment on Saint-Jean Baptiste Day. In the parade to celebrate Quebec's national day the white and blue of the fleur-de-lys was always reflected in the whiteness of the marchers' faces. Never a hint of Montreal's diverse ethnic communities.

Nevertheless, until mid-October, I was convinced that the majority of Quebeckers would vote 'No' to leaving Canada, just as they had in the 1980 referendum. This allowed me the luxury of a cool objectivity in the inevitable, sometimes interminable, discussions that raged around me in the days leading up to the vote.

This conviction melted with the growing realization that something was going on that I didn't understand. A nationalist fervour was sweeping the province. For the first time I had to confront the frightening realization that the 'Oui' might carry the day.

A week before referendum day a Francophone friend suggested that only French Quebeckers should vote, because only they felt passionately about the issue. As for me and my motley assortment of 'ethnic' friends, we should just stay out of it. Another Francophone friend warned that if the 'Yes' side lost because of the Anglophone and 'ethnic' vote, there would be a backlash. We got angry. Apparently we did not count, and therefore should not be counted. And, worst of all, the talk wasn't just coming from posturing politicians, it was coming from friends. But it also confused us. Could we, the non-French Quebeckers, be wrong? After all, these friends were people with whom we tended to agree on most questions of justice and injustice. Now their burning sense of national identity was putting up a wall between us. And they seemed so certain of their convictions.



C. MORRIS / SABA / REA

On the belly – 'ethnic' Quebeckers had no option but to vote for unity with Canada.

Our inner conflict intensified when, in an attempt to attract dissatisfied Quebeckers not ready to split from Canada, the sovereigntists tried to broaden the 'Oui' vote. It no longer meant a vote for a separate Quebec, it meant a vote against the status quo. We certainly did not consider ourselves in favour of a complacent and conservative status quo. So if we voted no, what did that mean about our own identities?

In the end there was no place for us on the 'Yes' side. We felt excluded by the rhetoric of the separatist Parti Québecois with its images of ethnic and linguistic uniformity. How else could we feel when one of the most successful slogans in the campaign was 'Vote Yes and Be the Majority'? We were left wrestling over our evasive identity, trying to construct a nationalism of our own to meet the challenge of the growing fervour of the 'Yes' side.

I spent referendum night with two friends who had just received an eviction notice from their landlord. The atmosphere was thick with a fear of homelessness. On one level, my friends were afraid of losing their apartment. On another level, we felt like the country itself was shifting under our feet.

My relief at the razor-thin 'No' victory never evolved into a feeling of celebration. But I think that the referendum process helped me to clarify what is at stake. Quebec's nationalist poet Gilles Vigneault wrote a beautiful song entitled *Mon Pays* in 1971. The first line is 'Mon pays, ce n'est pas un pays, c'est l'hiver'. My country is not a country, it is winter. Every Canadian knows what winter is. Snow is in our blood. But if we try to hold snow in our hands to examine it more closely, or put it under a microscope, it turns into water.

Nationalism has the power to seduce people who feel that their identity is threatened, offering a quick-fix solution for their problems. But Canada is a land of immigrants. If nationalism can only draw strength by promoting divisiveness, it will melt our fragile bonds in the heat of its passions.

Leslie de Freitas

concerns are some how less important than those of *la pure laine*.

Unfortunately for the nationalists there was a price to be paid for exclusionary politics in a multi-ethnic society – the lost votes of Montreal's immigrants and the entire native population.

The other soul of Quebec nationalism puts forward a more inclusionary program that would allow for a cultural diversity rooted in a fight for social rights. But people on this wing have shown a marked reluctance to weaken the nationalist front by criticizing the exclusionary nationalists. And unabashed cultural nationalists like the conservative Premier Jacques Parizeau have not hesitated to use populist appeals such as his claim that a 'Non' to sovereignty would be a signal to big business 'to spit in our soup'. Ironically the political will necessary to stand up to corporate pressure would need a mobilization of the vast majority of the Quebec population – something the exclusionary nationalists can never hope to achieve.

The question confronting Quebec nationalists is one that has confounded movements of national liberation throughout the latter half of the twentieth century. While Quebec will certainly be in better economic shape than post-colonial Ghana or Indonesia, the room for governments to manoeuvre and shape their own economic destinies has if anything narrowed from the heady days of Kwame Nkrumah and Ahmed Sukarno.

Quebec's provincial debt (without even adding on their share of the national debt) is the highest in the country, working out at about $10,212 per head. Unemployment is also a chronic Quebec problem with rates projected to remain over nine per cent into 1997. Dire warnings from major Quebec investors and international bond-rating agencies on the effects of a 'Oui' give a sense of the kinds of pressures an independent Quebec state dedicated to more egalitarian economic policies would face.

But the incapacity of the Canadian nation-state to defend living standards because of these same relentless forces is leaving the loyalty of its citizens in tatters and encouraging sovereigntist support in Quebec. The result is a gridlock that casts an interesting light on the fate of both nationalism and the nation-state.

Nationalist feeling is on the rise in many areas of the world, at least in part because of the economic dislocations wrought by the global economy and those who control it. Yet the nation-state, that cherished instrument of nationalists, is no longer a mighty tool of national will. So nations like Quebec may need to find other places of self-expression outside the narrowing corridors of state power. ■

Richard Swift is an editor with the *New Internationalist* in Canada. He is a Quebecker who now lives in Toronto.

The hand of God

Argentine nationalistic fervour rests on symbol and myth. As **Amaranta Wright** points out, this can be impossibly romantic – or eerily macabre.

ARGENTINA is obsessed with the dead bodies of the famous. Evita Peron's corpse endured a 16-year secret journey across the world in a battle for possession between political forces. The hands of the bodies of Juan Peron and Che Guevara have been mysteriously sawn off. When Peron's mutilation was discovered in 1975, labour unions organized a protest that was attended by 50,000 people.

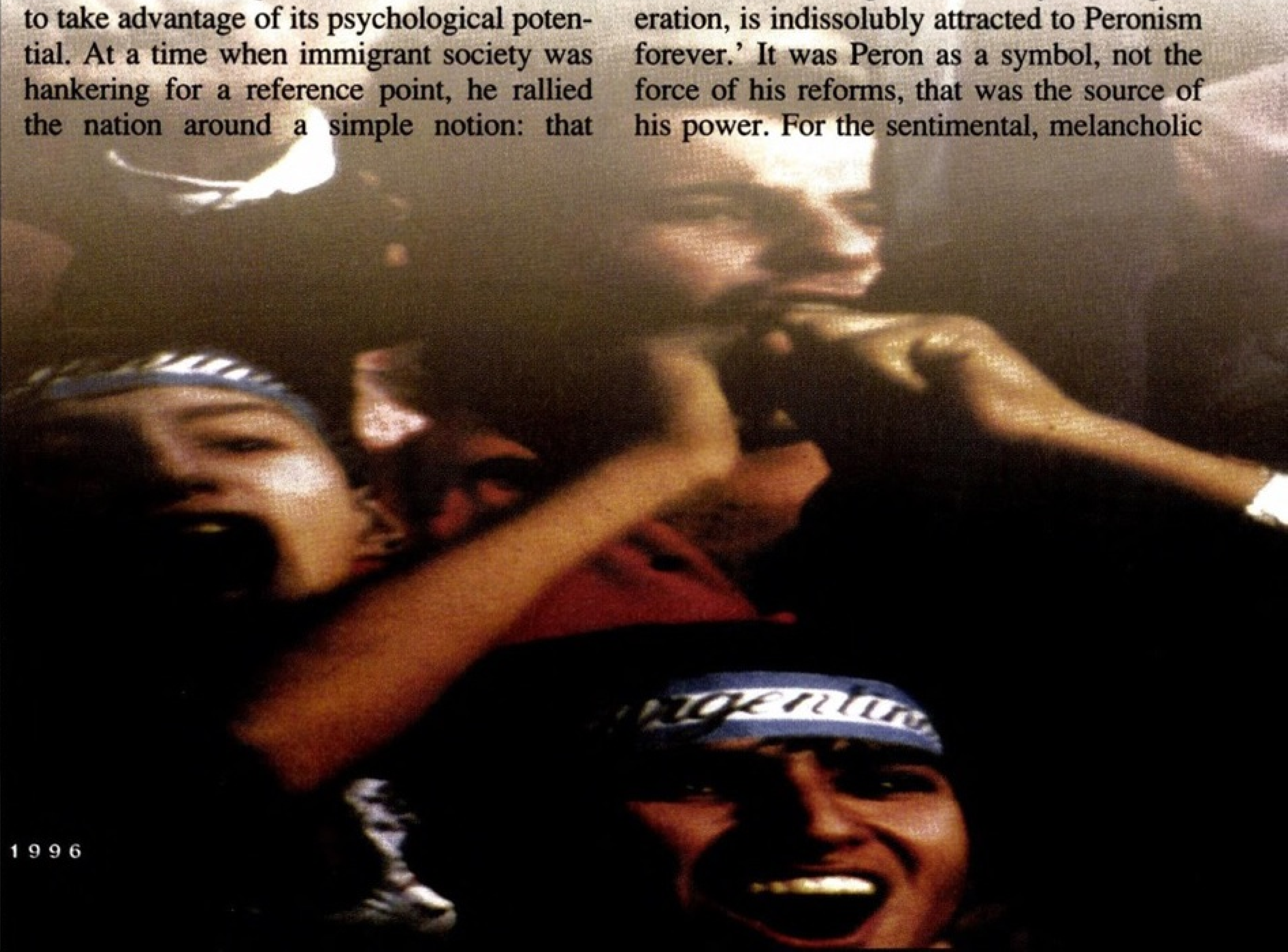
'There are no better examples of collective delirium than the mass convulsions of the Argentine people at the funerals of Gardel and Evita, and the return of Peron in 1973,' says historian Juan José Sebreli.

For the past century the common goal of trying to be 'different' and superior to the rest of Latin America has defined the nation. It is a strange breed of nationalism, a kind of collective narcissism developed into a caricature of arrogance.

This imaginative and highly emotional sense of patriotism is vulnerable to manipulation. Juan Peron himself, seen as the father of the modern Argentine state, was the first to take advantage of its psychological potential. At a time when immigrant society was hankering for a reference point, he rallied the nation around a simple notion: that Argentina was leading the noble battle against the economic imperialism of Britain and the US and was on its way to becoming the greatest country in the world.

Peron was forced into exile by jealous militaries in 1955 but 15 years later, in the intense political atmosphere of the early 1970s, both the left- and right-wing public demanded the return of their saviour. His arrival in 1973 provoked mass delirium. Peron spent his last days in power holding 70 per cent of the vote.

Juan Sebreli explains Peron's popularity as a kind of irrational attraction. He swears that even those groups – intellectuals, middle classes – who were loath to defend his totalitarian style were irrationally attracted to him. 'A whole generation, my whole generation, is indissolubly attracted to Peronism forever.' It was Peron as a symbol, not the force of his reforms, that was the source of his power. For the sentimental, melancholic



and insecure, Peronism provided more than just the singular satisfaction of Fatherland or Mother-country. Evita and Juan offered a full Parent-nation.

'Evita perhaps was the decisive ingredient in the personal myth of Peronism,' remembers Sebreli. Although her sordid past was deplored by the Church and the traditional élite, for ordinary people she was a romantic heroine whose fate allowed her to take vengeance against the society that at one time humiliated her. Although the difference between the ruthless social-climbing Evita and her image as giver to the people was glaringly obvious, Sebreli claims the public invented lies to justify their own worship of her: 'They said all the jewels she wore were stolen from rich people and would one day be donated to the public.'

Today, although President Carlos Menem was first elected in 1989 on a Peronist platform, the Peronist ideal of the nation-state is in crisis – and with it the concept of nationalism which proved most convincing to the people. Young people nowadays associate the word nationalism either with the uncontrollable left-wing 'craze' of the 1970s or with *Nazionalism*, the vented-up, sinister militaristic fantasies which left the country in ruins during the early 1980s.

Under the present ultra-liberal economy of President Menem's Government the old cultural symbols that inspired pride are disappearing. As the once-sacred customs of late-night Tango-bar prowling, local cinema, literature workshops and cabaret disappear into the sea of burgers, pop music and virtual-reality arcades, only a few mutterings can be heard which signal the awareness of a *pais vendido* – a 'country sold out'. The symbols of economic imperialism that Peron cast as the enemy are now welcomed.

'I'm glad we are not a nationalist country,' says 19-year-old Estevan. 'It would mean marching up and down school yards in military uniform and saluting the flag. Nobody believes in those things any more.'

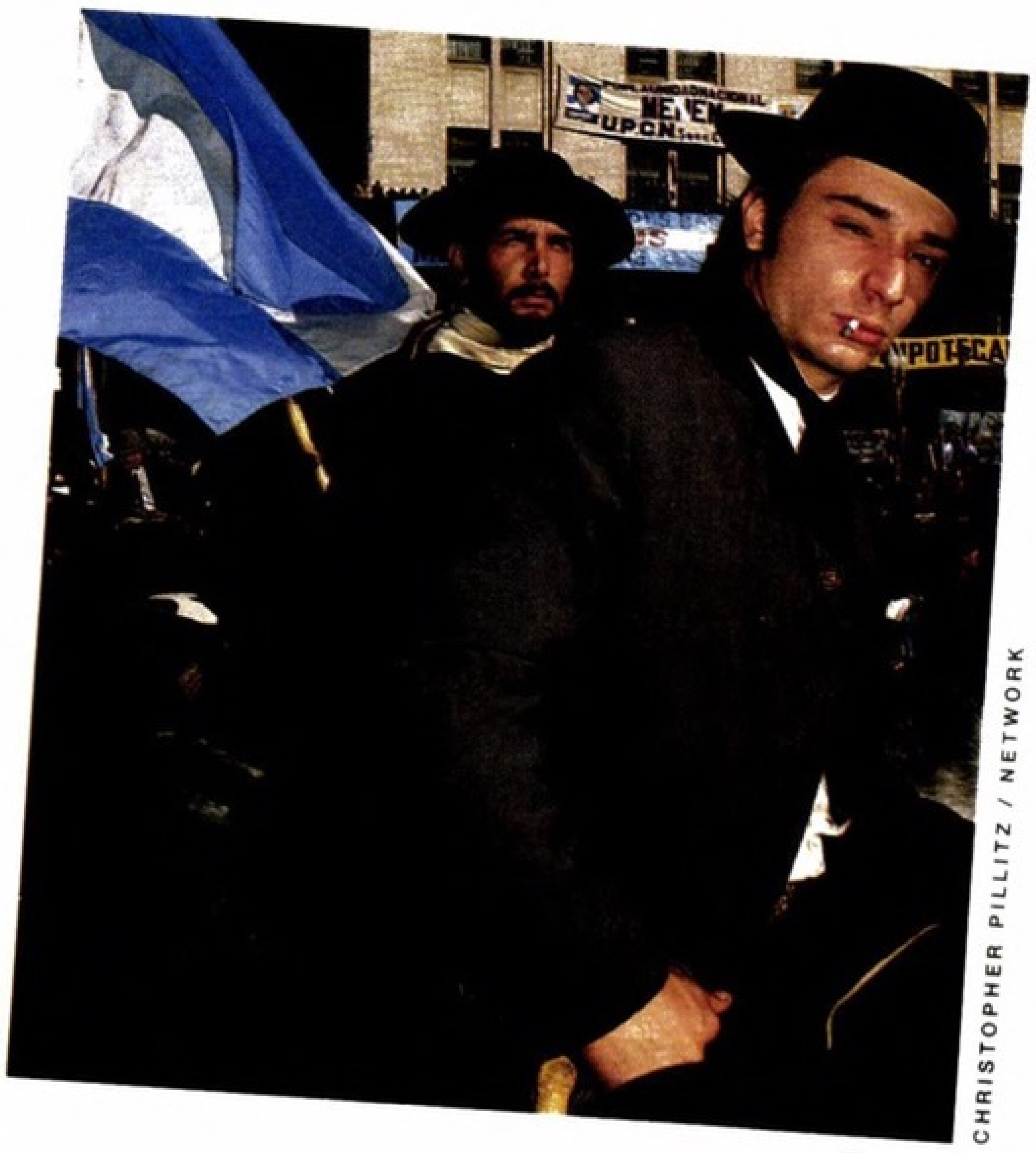
President Menem's 'opening up' to the global economy has also ensured the displacement of Argentina's traditional institutions. The Army is at its weakest point in history, the Catholic Church is losing its hold in the face of new Protestant-influenced denominations. People are resigned to the fact that Argentina never fulfilled the promises it was supposed to. It is just a no-good country like the rest of Latin America.

For a country that prided itself on being better than its neighbours, the new sensation is difficult to swallow. The immigrants who now flow into Buenos Aires bear the brunt of a new xenophobia. While the presence of US businesses is seen as something of an honour, the Chileans are resented. As one young banker whined: 'They've always wanted our land, and since they can't get that they are trying to steal our money'.

On the surface Argentine society appears to be wallowing in indifference and cynicism. National pride is a shadow of its former self. Taxi-drivers and workers who once boasted Argentina's greatness will today insist that Argentina is a *'pais de mierda'* – country of trash. Old left-wing political enthusiasts like Andres Wappner, embittered at the betrayal and catastrophic repression of 'national socialism', go as far as to say: 'This country doesn't exist. It has borders and a flag but that's where it ends.'

Menem copes with all this by playing to the imaginary desires of the public very much as Peron did. He points to the shopping mall, renovated docklands and new tourist trains and claims that they signal Argentina's emergence as a First-World Power.

In his second election victory, he no longer relied on Peronist nostalgia. But his playboy image – playing golf or hosting Claudia Schiffer at moments of political crisis – and the flaunting of his wealth before a nation facing severe economic hardship holds a perverse attraction to the masses. Like Peron, Menem is pure charisma.


CHRISTOPHER PILLITZ / NETWORK

Here's looking at you, kid – gauchos welcome President Menem into office.

And just as Peron had Evita by his side to rally the people to his vision, Menem has Maradona. It is arguable how much impact the footballer's declaration of support for Menem had during the last political campaign. But it is clear that when it comes to Maradona the famous Argentine fervour returns like a cyclone. Just as the image of Evita could not be tainted by the Church's moralistic criticisms, when the vices of Maradona are exposed the public rally to his defence.

When it comes to Maradona the famous Argentine fervour returns like a cyclone

That Maradona has become a national idol is no surprise. After all, it was his 'Hand of God' goal which helped Argentina win the 1986 World Cup and restored a piece of national pride. Just a mention of that magic moment today will put a gleaming smile on the face of any Argentine, no matter what class. It doesn't take much imagination to wonder what will happen to that hand once he is dead and gone. ■

Amaranta Wright is a freelance journalist working in Buenos Aires.

GRIFFITHS / MAGNUM

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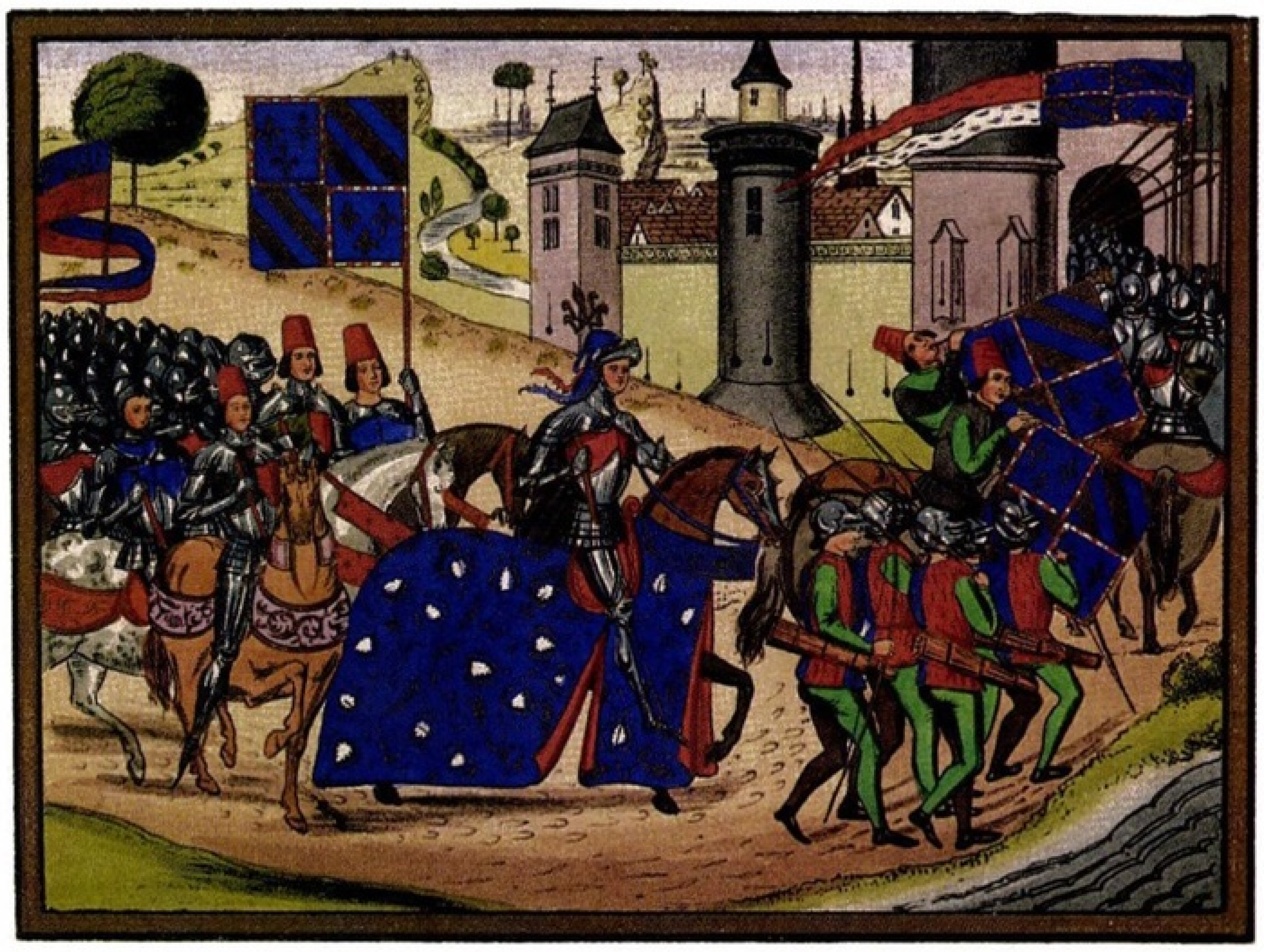


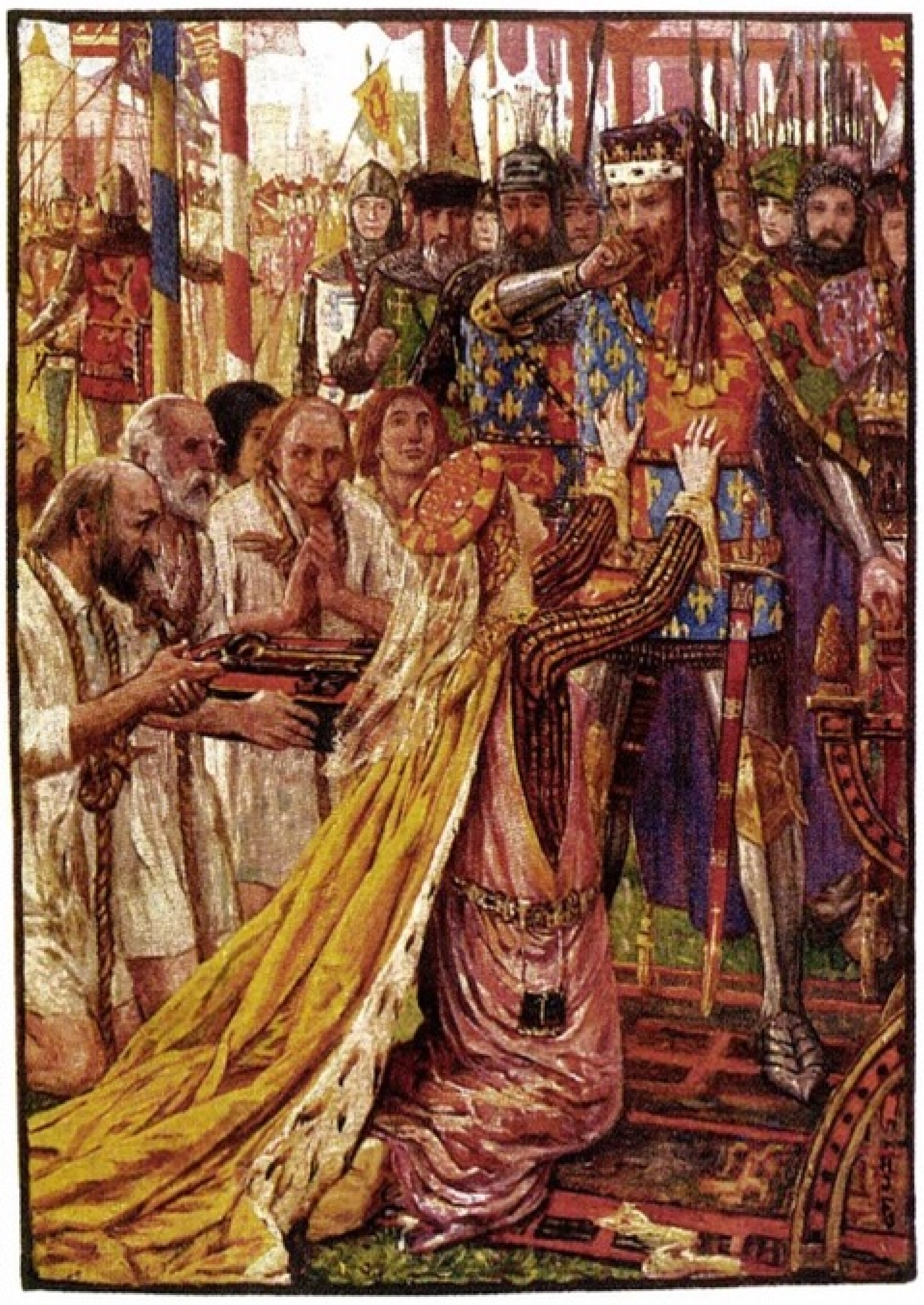
LORDS AND THEIR LANDS

The imperial armies of Ancient Rome and China conquered in the name of the emperor not the nation. In Europe in medieval times ordinary people owed their allegiance not to a state but to a feudal lord. Wars were fought between local aristocrats – like the Duke of Bourgogne (above) or the Earl of Warwick – not kings or queens. In other parts of the world, societies were divided along cultural or ethnic lines, but again, borders as such were fluid and ever-changeable.

THE NATION-STATE ARRIVES

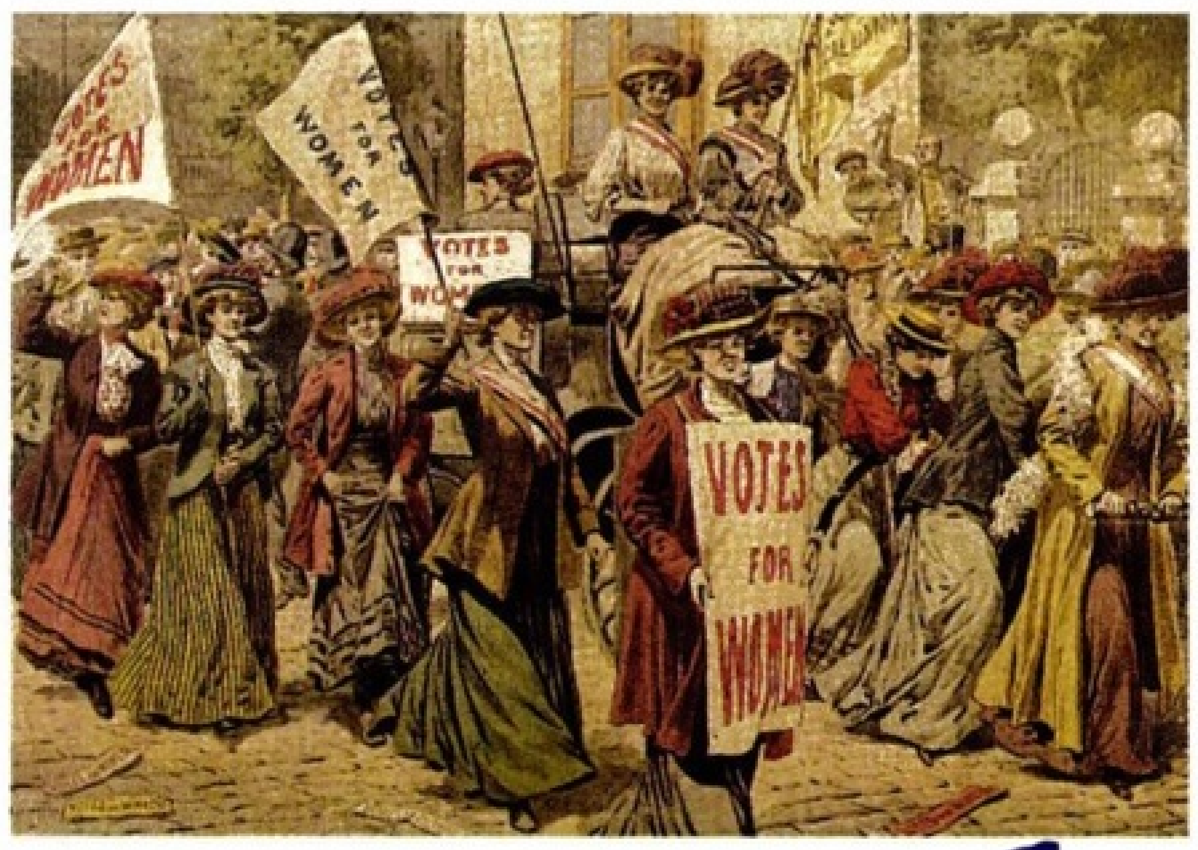
The business of nation-building has always been a bloody one. Feudal lords were forced to give up their regional autonomy by kings who wanted to rule over larger areas. It took the Hundred Years' War (1337-1453) to disentangle England from France, and the murder of thousands of Albigensians in the South of France to really establish France as a nation. Nation-states finally became a reality in North America and Western Europe in the latter half of the eighteenth century and in Latin America soon after.

Creating a nation-state was one thing; making the people who lived there believe in it was quite another. As writer and former Prime Minister of Piedmont, Massimo d'Azeglio, pointed out when the nation-state of Italy was created in 1861: 'We have made Italy, now we have to make Italians.'



The capture of Calais in 1347.

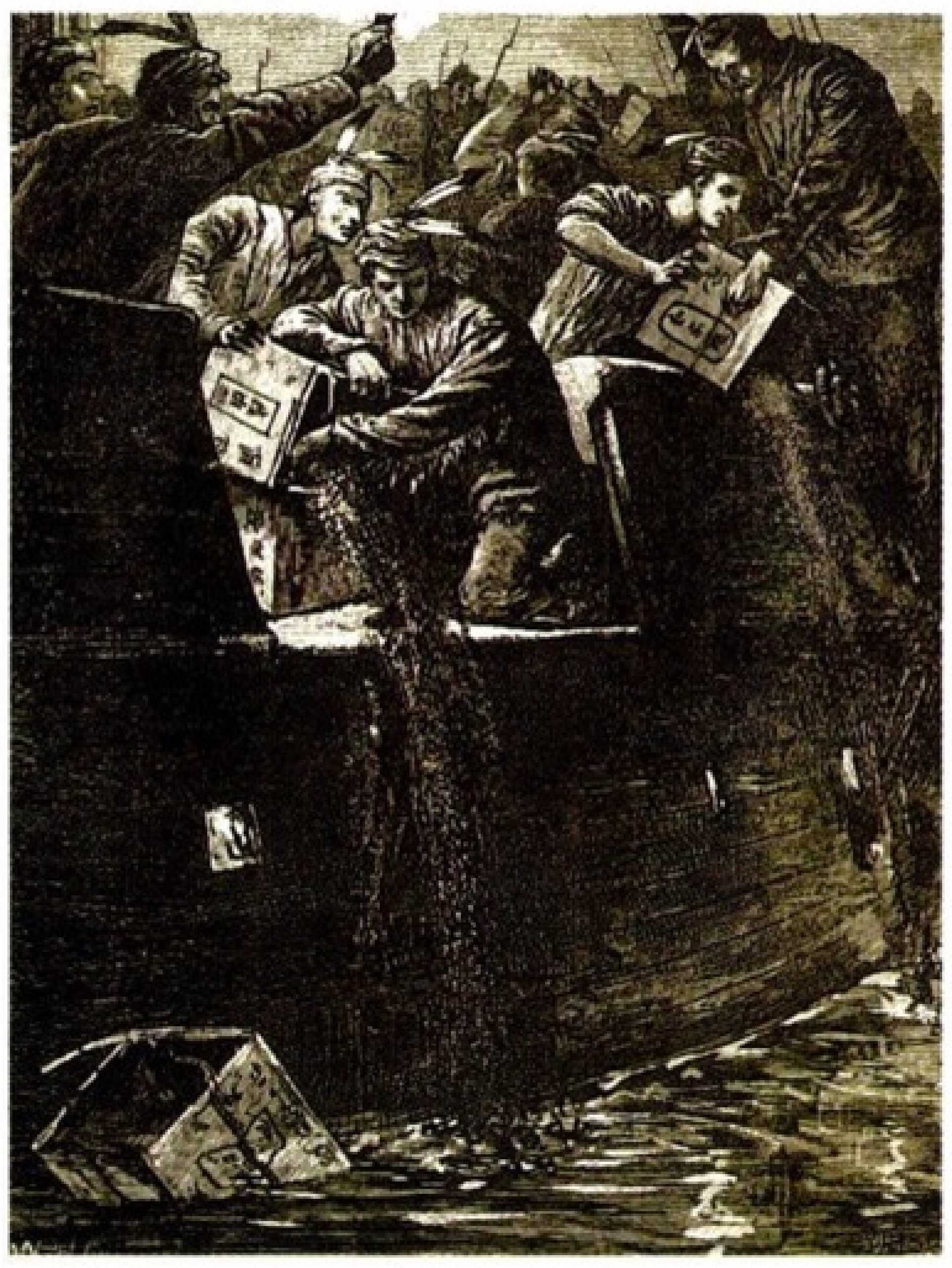
ALL IMAGES MARY EVANS PICTURE LIBRARY EXCEPT WHERE OTHERWISE INDICATED



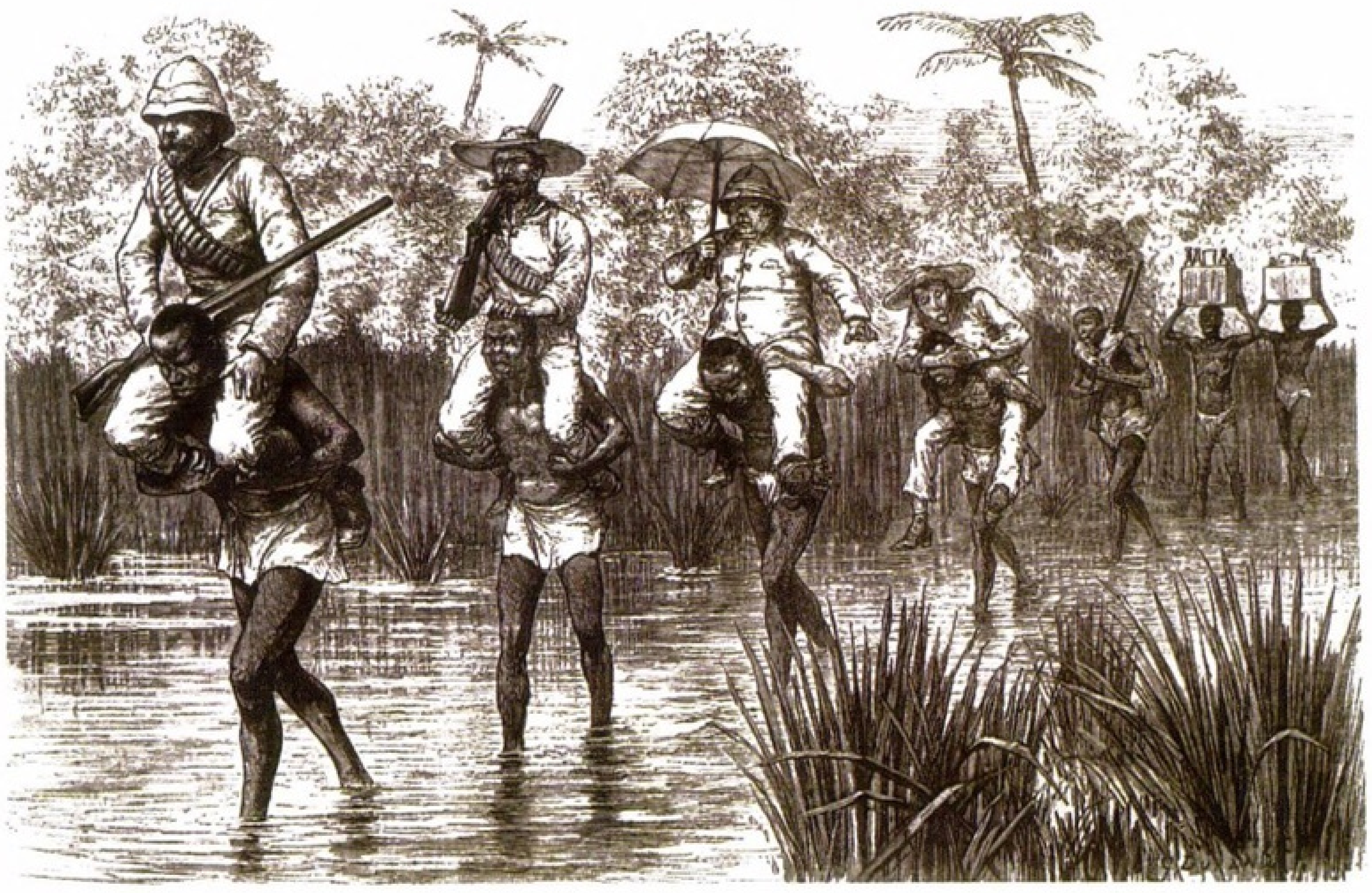
MOTHER-LANDS AND OTHER LANDS

'As a woman, I have no country,' wrote Virginia Woolf. In most of the new nation-states women and the working class were not regarded as citizens. Those without property could not vote and they were unable to stand for Parliament. Many nation-states built their identity through displays of military prowess and often by means of military conflict – from which women were also excluded. Leaders spoke of 'the Motherland' but nationalism was essentially a means of co-operation between moneyed patriarchies. As the vote was extended to women and to the working class, it became necessary for those patriarchies to be able to manipulate national identity in order to maintain loyalty and control.

THE NATION OF THE 'PEOPLE'



'The principle of Sovereignty resides essentially in the Nation: no body of men [sic], no individual, can express authority that does not emanate from it,' asserted the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen in 1792. American Independence (right, the Boston Tea Party, 1773) and the French Revolution created new national models which relied heavily on written constitutions, national flags and anthems. They also introduced a new concept of democratic citizenship – one which stirred ordinary people to revolt against the monarchy. Popular revolts in Europe were paralleled in the New World – in 1791 Toussaint L'Ouverture led an insurrection of black slaves that produced the independent republic of Haiti in 1804. Patriotism became the ultimate loyalty, supposedly superseding all other ties.



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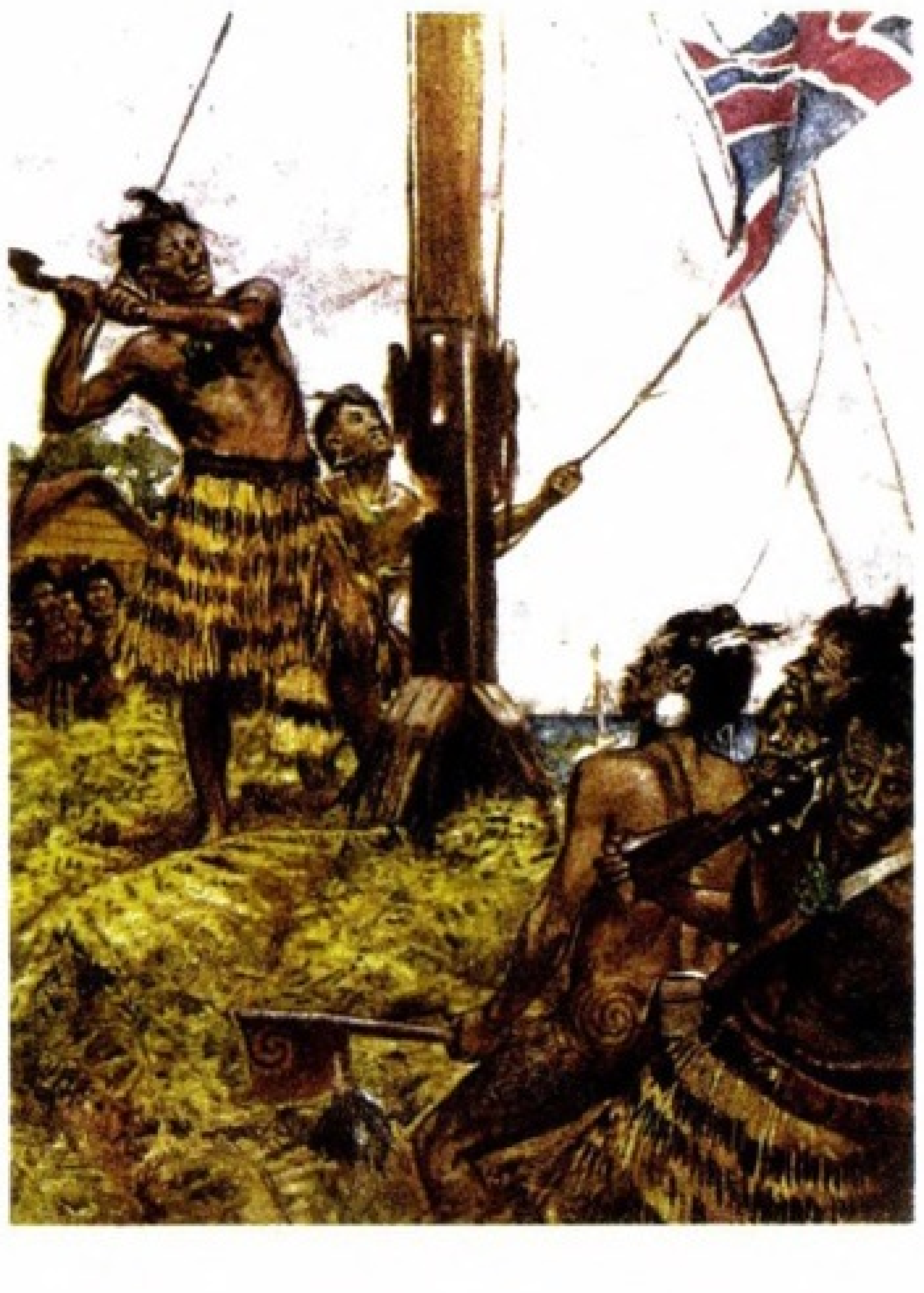
NATIONALISM EXPORTED

As European empires expanded to the Americas, Asia, Africa and the Middle East, the new rulers not only imposed colonial rule. They also brought their own model of the nation-state which was alien to most of the indigenous populations. The colonial powers divided up the world along straight lines which separated village from village and family from family in the name of imperial allegiance. Quite different – and sometimes antagonistic – peoples were enclosed within the same boundaries. Muslims and Hindus in India, Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda were played off against each other, and the peoples of those nations are still paying a bloody price for imperial nation-building.

As empires shrank and newly independent states declared their nationhood in the twentieth century, they did so – regardless of political credo – in the manner of those who had colonized them and in traditional style with guarded borders, flags and national anthems. Inevitably their power was resisted by those with other ethnic, religious or pan-nationalist loyalties.



Maori show their attitude to the British by felling the Union Jack in 1843.

FIRE IN THE BELLY

Of all the main political credos, nationalism has been the most successful. The emergence of national economies regulated by the state combined people's sense of economic security with their sense of geographic place. This has proved to be a potent blend to capture hearts and minds. In Russia and China communism not only failed to subvert nationalism but was taken over by it. Nationalism – often ethnic, sometimes religious – provides a convenient and believable credo for people trying to root themselves in the world. It is something to believe in, to belong to. And it suits those in power very well. It is easy to manipulate. It is a convenient tool for rulers to be able to whip up support as Slobodan Milosević did with Serbian nationalism. American support for George Bush rose from 50 to 90 per cent during the Gulf War.

THIS IS
Serbia

HEINE PEDERSEN / STILL PICTURES

THE NATION-STATE DOMINANT

Today the whole world – with the exception of Antarctica – is divided into nation-states and criss-crossed by boundaries. National identity has become as much a part of our psychological make-up as gender, race or class. The major conflicts being fought in the world today are almost all struggles to form new national identities – often based supposedly on race or ethnicity.

The irony here is that of the 185 nation-states there are perhaps only a handful which do not include as part of their make-up large 'minority' groups. Nation-states today are essentially multicultural which is why separatist movements are often forced to create identities from the past and resurrect former supposed glories in order to create new 'imagined communities'.

THE NATION SANDWICHED

But the story does not end here. Though the number of nation-states is still on the increase – as countries like former Yugoslavia and the USSR have splintered – their control is being eroded. Many of the original functions of the nation-state – welfare, defence, state ownership of production, railways, and crucially, communications – are either in the hands of the international community or have been privatized. Giant multinational companies and international banks bestride the world stage. To quote the UN's Human Development Report (1993): 'The nation-state now is too small for the big things and too big for the small.' At the same time, ordinary people have less faith than before in the trappings and structures of the state – the monarchy or presidency, parliament and politics. Where the state collapses – Somalia, the Lebanese civil war, Sri Lanka – local warlords are re-emerging. The wheel has come full circle.

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TRADE MARKS

ABBAS / MAGNUM

Mother India

Urvashi Butalia asks why feminism and nationalism sit so uneasily together and charts women's unequal relationship with the nation-state.

'I DON'T understand what you mean by this nation business,' says Ramrati, a poor construction worker from Kanpur in north India. 'What does it have to do with me? All I'm concerned about is my family and where their next meal is coming from. Why should I feel any concern for this thing you call a nation? After all, no-one asked me how I felt when it was being made.'

I have often asked myself similar questions. What, or who, for example, is an Indian? What is it that makes up my identity as an Indian? And more, as an Indian *woman*? What do I have in common with the millions of other women who fall under the same broad rubric? Little other than the fact of this nationality which has been thrust upon us. And yet, there have been any number of times when I have felt a sense of closeness, of belonging with other 'Indian' women. I have found myself claiming my 'Indian-ness' with pride and passion in places that lie beyond the geographical boundaries of my country, assuming somehow that I am different from those I am talking to, and similar to those I am talking about.

RAGHU RAI / MAGNUM

Celebrating Lord Ram: all 'true' nationalists are supposed to be men.

Why does nationalism exert such a powerful pull? Rada Iveković, a Croatian-Serbian philosopher living in exile in Paris has one explanation. She tells me that in today's world identities are in a permanent state of flux – feminist identities, ethnic identities, identities based on disability, sexual preferences, religions and so on. In the face of this the new nationalisms offer a security to which people cling, a primordial rootedness.

So why do I as a woman feel so uncomfortable about my relationship with the nation-state? Tanika Sarkar, an Indian historian, enlightens me: 'Women will always be incomplete national subjects. This is because a nation is a territorial concept. Land is central. Yet women often, and most women in India certainly, have no right to land. These two things, home and land, will never belong to them.' (In many Indian languages the words *desh* – roughly, country/nation – and *vatan* – home – are often used overlappingly.)

And yet women do feel that they have a stake when it comes to nation-building. Half a century ago our 'nation-ness' – or our nationality – was defined in opposition to another newly formed nation, Pakistan. The Indian nationalist movement mobilized thousands of women from across classes, castes, communities.

Tanika explains again: 'Often,' she says, 'it is at times when the nation comes into being through a process of struggle that women can come into their own. Women are not only incomplete subjects, but in a permanent state of homelessness. Thus the search for a homeland, which is what new nations are often about, is a search with which they deeply identify, and in which they feel involved.'

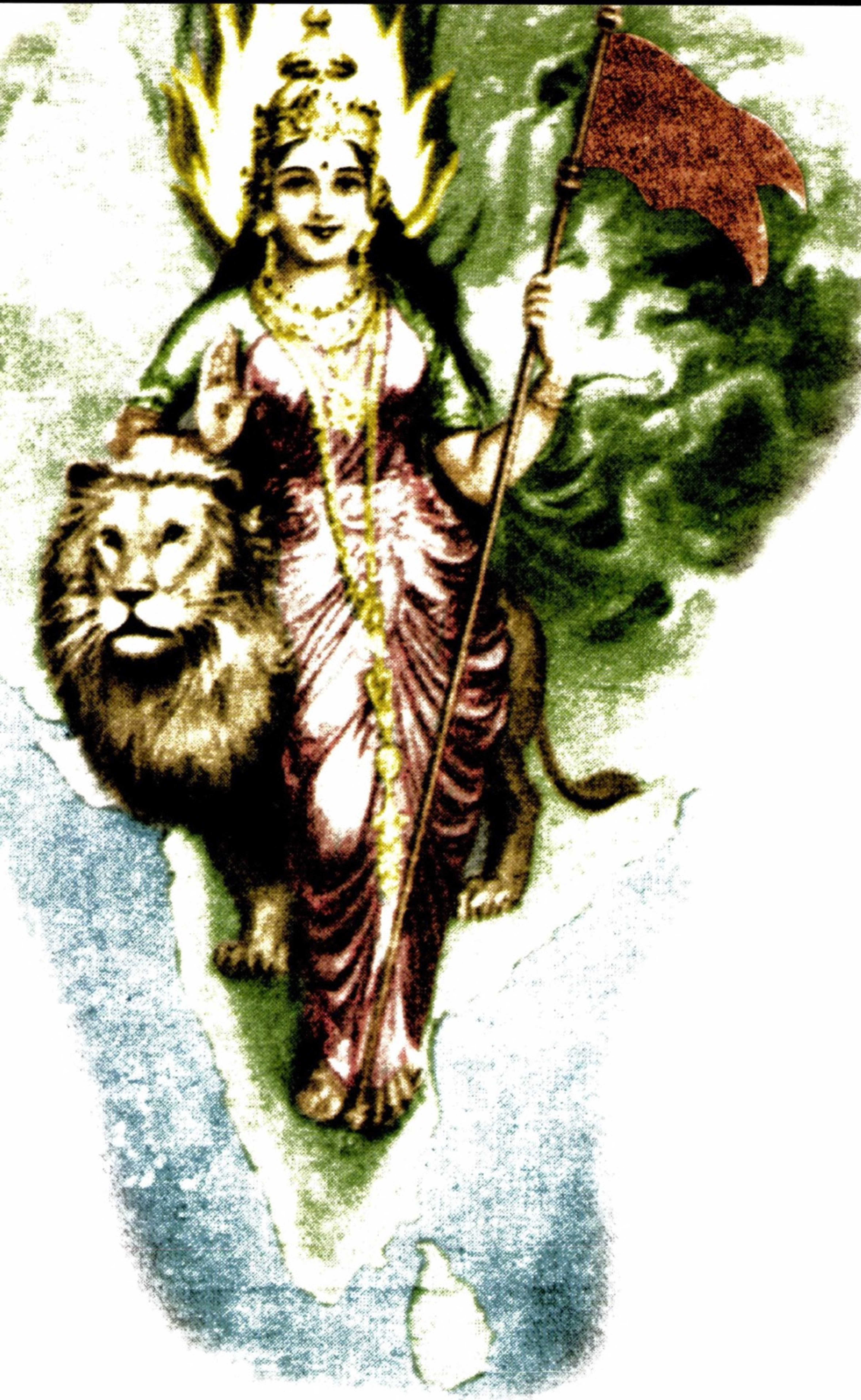
But once the nation comes into being, women have little to do with how it is formulated.

In India after 1947, laws were made to men's advantage; it was men (mainly upper-caste Hindu men) who put the Constitution together. When policies and plans were formulated, they made no mention of women. For Indian nationalists, some citizens were more equal than others. But then, I tell myself, Indians are not unique in this: there's hardly a place in the world where national liberation movements have meant liberation for women.

So this is why all 'true' nationalists are supposed to be men. We're told that they're the ones who go out and fight to defend the nation, who lay down their lives for it, who carve out nations, who define their boundaries and who create their laws and social mores. Perhaps this is why the 'nation' means little or nothing to women like Ramrati.

But there is a way in which women, and women's bodies, become central to the process of nation-making. Normally relegated to the margins, at times of nationalist struggle women come to symbolize the honour and virtue of the nation. They become the icons, the mother-figures for whom men are willing to lay down their lives. It is on this notion of womanhood that the cultural identity of the community and the nation is staked.

Throughout the freedom movement in India, nationalists portrayed the country in



feminine terms. India was 'the motherland'. When another nation, Pakistan, was carved out of its territory, it was as if the body of the mother – India – had been violated. Maps of India, with the body of a woman, often a goddess, mapping its territory, were commonplace among Indian nationalists. On 14 August, 1947, the day before the country was partitioned and became a 'nation', the front page of a Hindu right-wing weekly, the *Organiser,* carried a map of India on which lay a woman. Her right limb (which mapped Pakistan) had been severed, with Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime Minister, leaning over her holding in his hand a bloody knife.

In the large-scale violence that Partition generated, thousands of women were actually raped, abducted, sold into slavery and prostitution, both by their own men and those of the 'other' community. When the time came for them to 'go home', many had formed new relationships and did not want to leave. A female social worker at the time, trying to send a group of 21 abducted women back to their 'national' home was faced with the question: 'Who are you to meddle in our lives?' Another, engaged in similar work, said that at times she sympathized with the abducted women 'as a woman', but she felt that she had to 'act as an Indian' and so actively participated in their return. The abducted women had no choice: once a woman was located, her sexuality (otherwise feared to be out of control through sexual congress with the 'other') could be regulated and return was enforced. Hindu and Muslim women had to be brought back to their Hindu and Muslim nations, to their real 'nations'.

Thus the same motherland which came to signify 'home' and 'country' for men had a different meaning for women. For Indian women, the process of nation-making was not one of finding an identity, rather it was simply one where old, existing patriarchies, old models of hierarchy and control, found new expression. Women were left very much where they were before – and perhaps even worse off.

Today, the problem hasn't gone away. Rather, it has become more complicated. India's new nationalism, vocally propounded by the Hindu right wing, sees women as mothers and wives, supporters of men as they struggle for a Hindu *rashtra* or nation. Feminism is an ugly word. Good Hindu women stay at home and help to shore up patriarchy.

Good Hindu women stay at home and help to shore up patriarchy

On occasion they are allowed access to the public space, but the boundaries are very clearly demarcated. You can bring 'national honour' to the country by winning a beauty contest (and there was tremendous pride in India last year because both the Miss Universe and Miss World crowns had gone to Indian women) but demanding equality of citizenship is seen as 'anti-national' and 'Western'.

This is why feminists in India today have a harder task than ever. It is their research that has exposed the gender-blindness that informed the process of nation-making in 1947. They're the ones who are resisting the homogenization of the Hindu Right. They are calling for the State to grant equal rights to all its citizens. In the last few years, it is women who have started the process of opening up contact with their sisters in 'trouble' areas such as Kashmir and Punjab – another activity that has earned them the epithet 'anti-national'.

Women are saying: we only want nationalism if it means gender equality and democratic rights. We only want a nation that accepts women and other marginalized people as citizens and full national subjects. If not, this nationalism, and this nation, is not worth having. It's time to question and reframe the definitions we have been given. ■

Urvashi Butalia is a writer and editor. She works in Delhi with Kali for Women, India's first feminist publishing house which she co-founded in 1984.

D. LANDWHER / ICRC

The bare necessities – from horses instead of cars to standpipes instead of taps, human ingenuity finds ways around the troubles in Tuzla.

Springs of **hope**

Tony Samphier explodes many of the cosy Western assumptions about the conflict in Bosnia and finds some lessons for the future in multi-ethnic Tuzla.

THERE are no fat people in Tuzla. The physical wounds of war – disabled combatants, blown-out windows, shrapnel-damaged buildings – are open for all to see. But against all odds, the streets bustle with everyday economic, social and civic activity. Most things work and, if they don't, human ingenuity takes over to make ends meet.

In the early part of the war, when Tuzla was blockaded and petrol in short supply, horse-driven carts were dusted off and put to work. Nowadays, because cash is hard to come by, most people dig a plot of land in their spare time and grow vegetables.

Civil society has, surprisingly, flourished under war conditions and is a key link in Tuzla's non-nationalist armoury. Non-nationalists are in charge of local government. They were elected with a sizeable vote in the 1991 free elections. Vehid Sehić, head of the 10,000-strong Forum of Tuzla Citizens, views public action as the best way for Bosnia to chart a course away from nationalism. In August 1995, for example, civil society groups in Tuzla sprang into action to collect thousands of signatures demanding that the popular and liberal-minded Prime Minister, Haris Silajdzić, withdraw his resignation in protest at being locked out of national decision-making. 'Stick in there; we love you,' was the people's verdict and, by public demand, he returned to office. By refusing to surrender to the Serb nationalist shells and the ideas of ethnic division and intolerance which propelled them, Tuzla has kept the flame of peaceful co-existence sparkling in Bosnia. This refusal to hate has given the physical hardship endured by the civilian population a higher moral purpose.

Even so, it will be hard for Tuzla to forgive or forget. The painful memory of 25 May 1995, when 71 young students from all ethnic groups were blown to pieces by a single shell whilst they celebrated a basketball victory at a town-centre café, has scarred the emotional spirit of the town forever.

Vehid Sehić demands reconciliation – with justice. At the meeting of the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly staged in Tuzla in October 1995, he said: 'Besides the horrible experiences, atrocities and temptations in this war, we cannot survive without making amends and living together… We do not propose total amnesty nor collective absolution, because that would mean the philosophy of forgiving crimes, which is exactly the same as participating in them. But also, no nation could be proclaimed responsible for the crimes committed by individuals from that nation.'

Past struggles – mainly fighting off invaders rather than amongst themselves – run through Tuzla's political identity like blood through veins. The people of Tuzla are visibly proud of their traditions – family bookshelves are weighed down by reports of the heroic excursions to Spain of the Tuzla International Brigade during the 1936-39 Civil War. History gives life, meaning and direction to contemporary resistance.

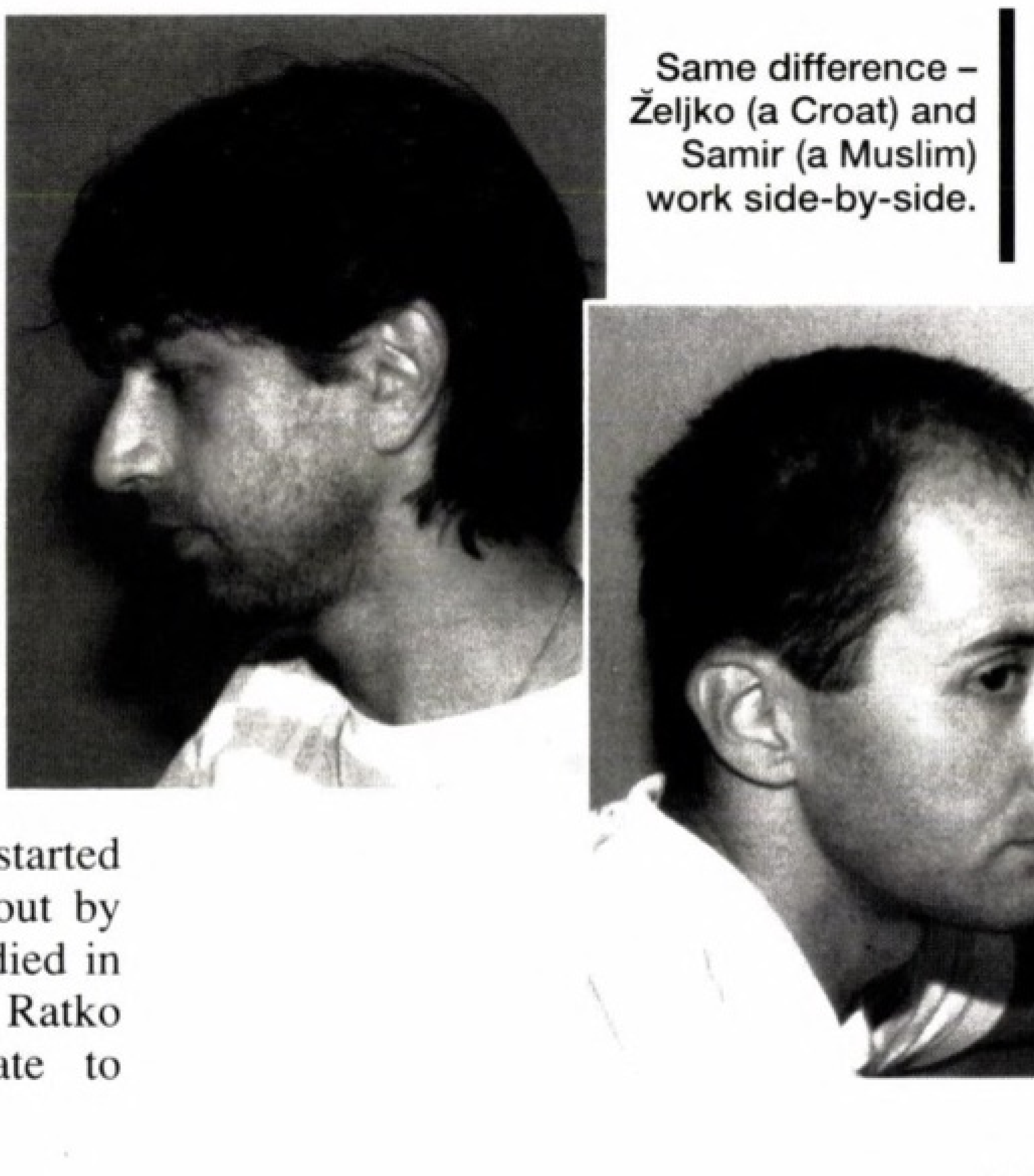
In the early nineteenth century, the independence struggle against Turkish rule was born in Tuzla. Later that century, Tuzla drove back the Austrian-Hungarian Empire forces.

The Goat, Tuzla's modern-day mascot which is said to represent Good, is a rebel symbol. According to a popular folktale, it stems from the time under Austrian-Hungarian rule when a group of Tuzla citizens defied an order not to keep goats.

The Snake is the opposing symbol for Evil. This is a throwback to the 1831 revolt against Turkish occupation, when the Turkish army surrounded Tuzla in snake-like fashion.

Even today, the Mayor of Tuzla, Selim Bešlagić, characterizes the conflict in his country in these terms. 'This is definitely a fight between good and evil,' he insists. 'It is wrong to present this as an inter-ethnic conflict. Here we have aggression by one side and the fight for survival on the other.' He fears that history is repeating itself, a theme echoed by a recent booklet produced by his administration which declares: 'The snakes, they keep on coming.'

'The picture is the same but the timing and actors are different,' Bešlagić argues. 'Mussolini started fascist ideas, and his role is acted out by Slobodan Milosevic. Hitler is embodied in Radovan Karadzić. When General Ratko Mladić was handing out chocolate to imprisoned children in Srebrenica, it reminded me of the pictures of Himmler in the concentration camps.



Same difference – Željko (a Croat) and Samir (a Muslim) work side-by-side.

BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOS BY TONY SAMPHIER

'Unfortunately, the Great Powers often act in the way Chamberlain did.'

Tuzla's anti-fascist heritage is strong. At the start of the Second World War, for example, the Muslim community in Tuzla protected the Serb and Jewish population from the extremist Croatian *ustashas*, who were in league with the Nazis and bent on having their inhuman slice of the holocaust. The Tuzla region was the centre of resistance to Nazi occupation and, after liberation by the Partisan Army in 1943, became the largest free town in Europe.

In that year, the Tuzla-based newspaper *Front Slobode* (Freedom Front) was launched on the wave of liberation. Over 50 years later, it keeps afloat on the town's spirit of resistance and little else. The front page reads: 'The title will appear again when the money is collected.' To give up now would be to concede defeat in the battle of ideas, which they see as the most important battle of all.

Bosnia never wanted the old Yugoslav federation to end in the way it did. Only after Croatia gained international recognition in 1992, against the pleas of Bosnian leaders, and the subsequent thumping two-thirds referendum majority for independence, did Bosnia reluctantly go it alone.

'The Bosnian people decided to leave former Yugoslavia because of the rise of nationalism in other regions,' says Tuzla University academic Osman Sinanović. 'It was better to leave than to live with the extreme nationalist government in Belgrade.'

But as Sinanović is quick to point out, this move was not anti-Serb, but anti-nationalist. Mayor Bešlagić is adamant that Bosnia's 'unity of difference' must be respected and guarded in order that ethnic cleansing can be nipped in the bud before it marches across multicultural Europe.

'If my country is divided along ethnic lines, there will be no more Bosnia-Herzegovina,' he says. 'And it has existed for over 1,000 years.'

In Tuzla, about a quarter of marriages are between partners from different ethnic backgrounds. Murveta Stević is a primary school teacher who has soldiered on at the chalk-face with no pay, few resources and shell-fire blasting her school playground. She has done so because a multi-ethnic Bosnia is the only realistic option for her family. She is a Muslim and her husband a Serb. 'What does that make our son?' she asks. 'Bosnian, of course. His religion is up to him.'

Europe wants us to live in tribes, but Bosnia is a melting pot where Muslims, Croats and Serbs are all Bosnians first

'We are against all ethnic separation and we teach all children from all backgrounds, equally and without prejudice,' she explains. 'The power of knowledge will conquer human cruelty.'

In sharp contrast to Western stereotypes, ethnic labels seem to matter little in Tuzla and life chances are based as much on merit as in the most democratic of European democracies.

Samir Ibrulj and Željko Kešina are roughly the same age. They both attended Tuzla's Electrical Engineering School and chose careers in the telecommunications service after a stint of military service with the former Yugoslav Army.

Ibrulj is a Muslim and Kešina a Croat, and they have worked side by side to keep the telephone system up and running throughout the war. 'There are those who want to live and work together and those who want to divide Bosnia,' Kešina explains. Ibrulj adds: 'Europe wants us to live in tribes, but Bosnia is a melting pot where Muslims, Croats and Serbs are all Bosnians first.'

Osman Sinanović neatly sums up Bosnia's national identity with the simple words: 'Multi-ethnicity is Bosnia. It is our quality and it is the normal way of life for us.'

Though Tuzla is clearly the multi-ethnic jewel in Bosnia's crown, many observers now argue that this is threatened by the changed demography of the region.

The last census, carried out before war erupted in 1992, showed up 44 per cent of Tuzla

Dr Amila Azapagić – a Bosnian, a woman and a democratic Muslim.

citizens describing themselves as Muslim, 16 per cent as Croat, 16 per cent as Serb and 24 per cent as 'others'. But since then, around 250,000 refugees have settled in the area who are, by and large, Muslim.

Radical elements in the main Muslim political party, the Democratic Action Party (SDA) which heads up the national government in Sarajevo, have sought to exploit this situation and undermine support for Mayor Beslagić's multi-ethnic Union of Bosnian Social Democrats. But the SDA is a broad church embracing a Muslim separatist wing, towards which Bosnian President Alija Izetbegović leans, and a liberal secular wing represented by Prime Minister Haris Silajdzić.

It is difficult to see such a political force holding together once the cut and thrust of peacetime democratic politics gets into full swing. So perhaps the fears for the future of the non-nationalist project in Tuzla are exaggerated. Only time – and elections – will tell.

Dr Amila Azapagić worked at the front-line for the Bosnian Army, treating the victims of 'ethnic cleansing'. She talks with passion about the fight against rape in war. She has a picture of Haris Silajdzić pinned to her living-room wall. She believes that the anti-nationalist cause has nothing to fear from Islam. 'Liberty, progress and democracy are what my faith has taught me,' she argues.

Though her political perspective is through the lens of Islam – the Qur'an has pride of place on her bookshelf alongside pictures of her uncle who was a famous officer in the Partisan Army – Azapagić scoffs at the idea of Islamic fundamentalism in her country.

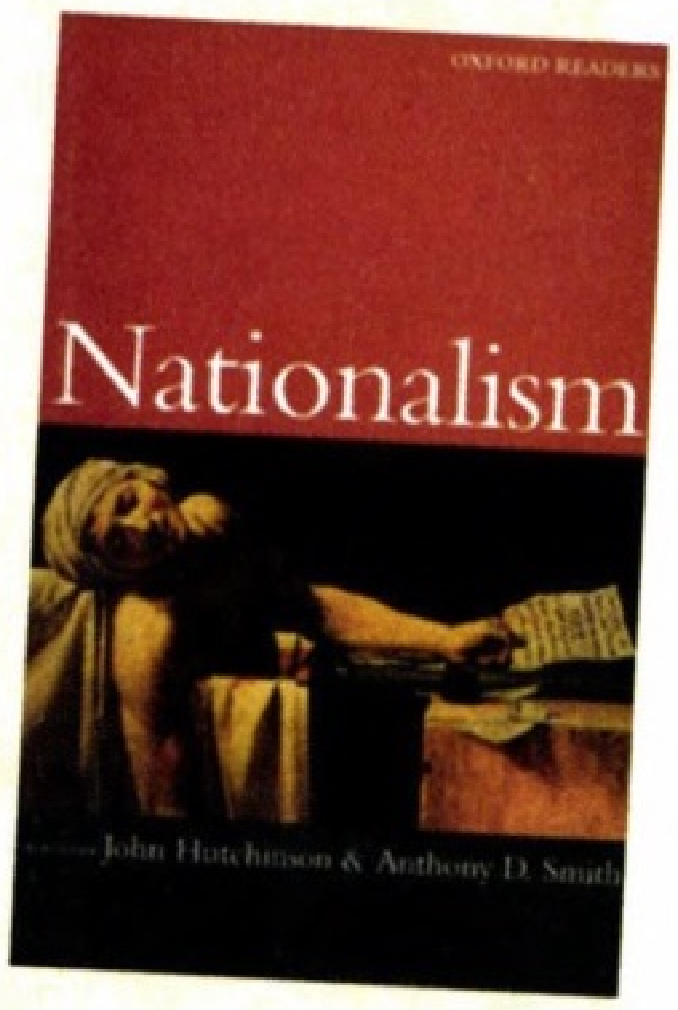
'I am a Bosnian, a woman and a European democratic Muslim,' she says. 'My fight is to defend democratic and multi-ethnic Bosnia.'

'With the help of Allah,' she adds with a broad smile. ■

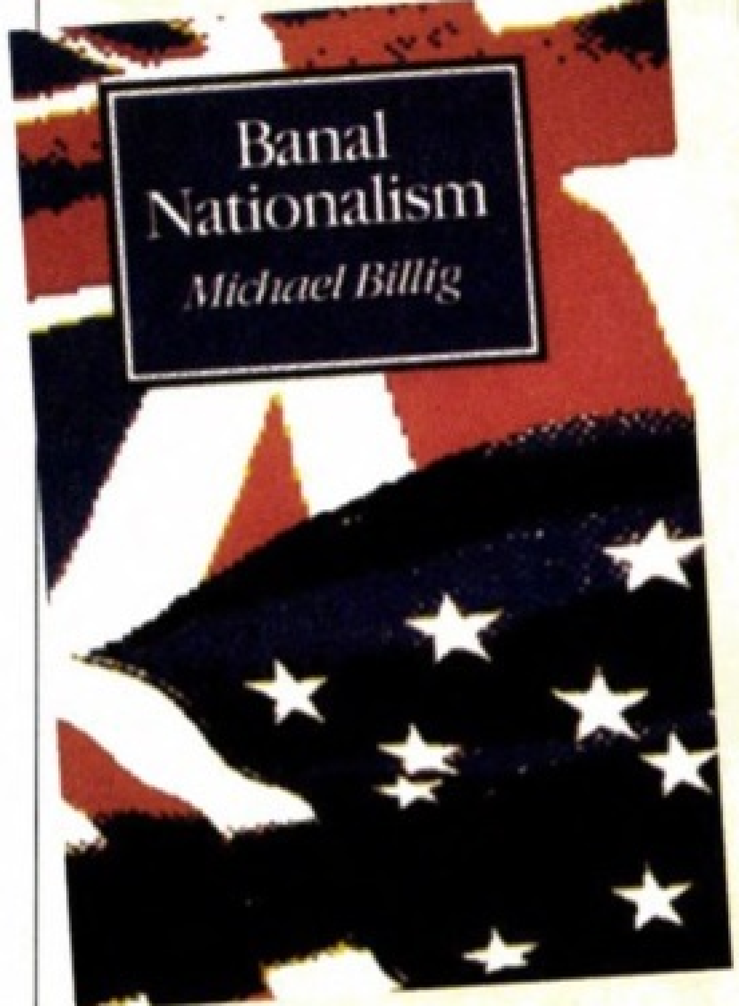
Tony Samphier is a freelance journalist specializing in international affairs.

BOOKS

When I first started getting interested in nationalism three years ago, there were very few books that I could find to read. In the last year or so, they have been pouring out of publishing houses in a veritable stream.

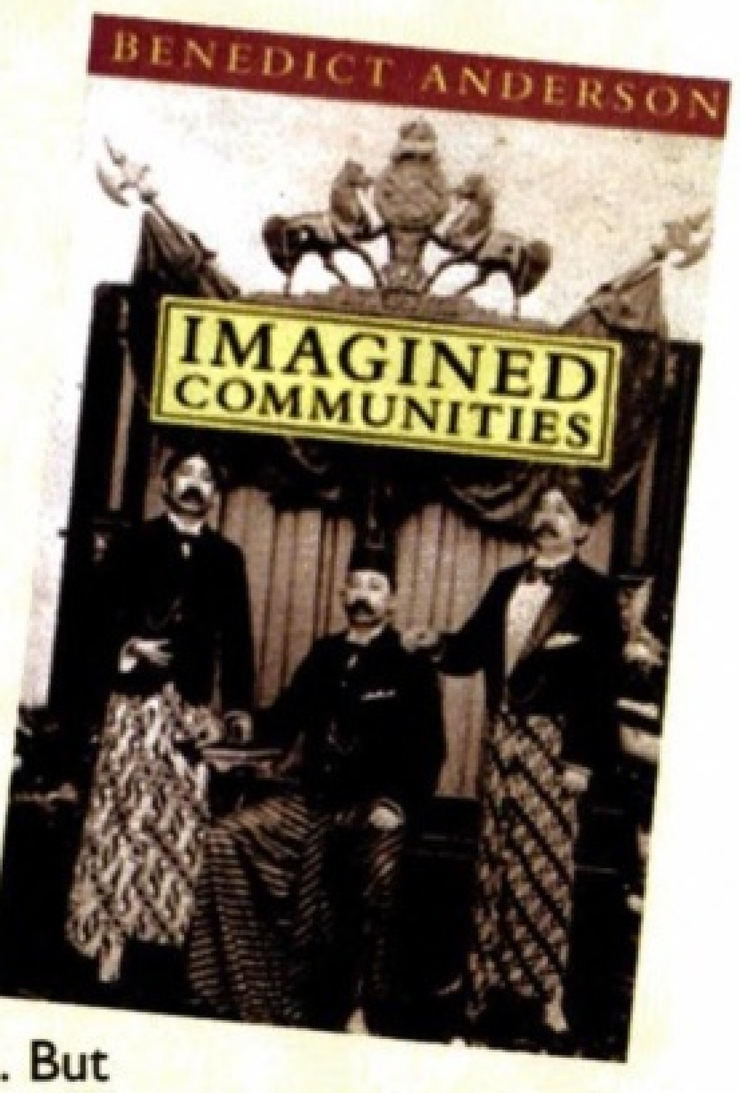


If you want a compilation of the main thinking on the subject, try the range of extracts in **Nationalism: An Oxford Reader** edited by John Hutchinson and Anthony D Smith (Oxford University Press 1994). It has short pieces by most of the specialists in the field from Stalin(!) to Benedict Anderson, and it is usefully divided into categories like 'Nationalism and the International System' and 'Beyond Nationalism'.



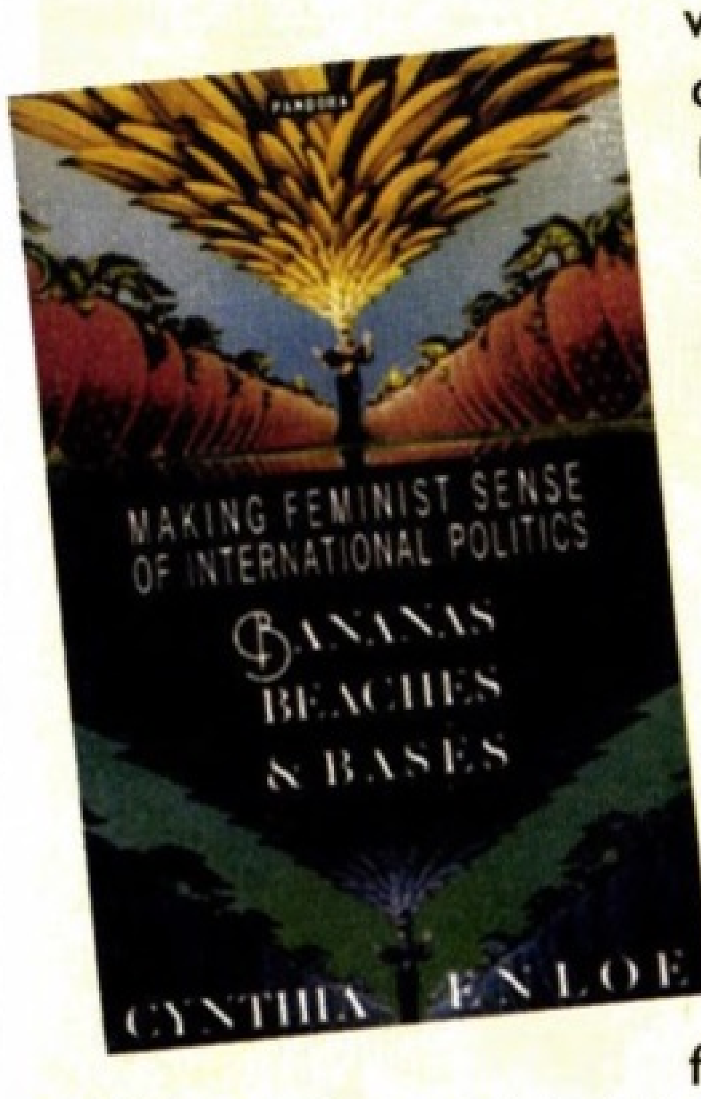
A good read – though I happen to disagree with him – is Michael Ignatieff's personal account of his own encounters with nationalism in **Blood and Belonging: Journeys into the New Nationalism** (Vintage 1994). I really enjoyed the more psychological take of **Banal Nationalism** by Michael Billig (Sage Publications 1995) and much of my more abstract thinking on the subject was underpinned by Benedict Anderson's theories in **Imagined Communities** (Verso 1983) (though you will get the gist of his ideas in the Oxford Reader).

I would recommend anything by Anthony D Smith, who has both an historical and a global perspective. His most recent book is **Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era** (Polity Press 1995). He also edits the new journal **Nations and Nationalism**, the first edition of which was published by the UK-based London School of Economics in March 1995. Another journal which often has articles on nationalism (and is worth reading in any case) is the **New Left Review**, which has a range of writers from all around the world including Branka Magas from former Yugoslavia, the historian Eric Hobsbawm (whose general books are also interesting on nationalism) and Achin Vanik from India.



If you are interested in the way in which transnationals and global capital are undermining the nation-state, you should read **When Corporations Rule the World** by David C Korten (Earthscan Publications Ltd 1995) for a humane and hopeful view and Kenichi Ohmae's book **The End of the Nation-State** (Harper Collins 1995) for a more corporate one.

You may have noticed that so far all the books have been written by men. It seems that women have only written about nationalism in so far as it affects women – which is a shame. But **Woman-Nation-State**, edited by Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias (Macmillan 1989) is well worth a read for its detailed analysis of women's situations in countries ranging from Iran to Uganda to Australia, and Cynthia Enloe is her usual incisive self with **Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics** (Pandora 1989).



For an historical account, read Kumari Jayawardena's **Feminism and nationalism in the Third World** (Zed Press 1994), and Basil Davidson's **The Black Man's Burden: Africa and the curse of the Nation-State** (James Curry, 1992). Jorge G Casteneda in **Utopia Unarmed: the Latin American Left after the Cold War** (Vintage 1994) addresses the knotty question of the relationship between the Left and nationalism in Latin America, while George Orwell's essays, including *My Country Right or Left* show how nationalist feelings can throw even the most dedicated left-winger into a flat spin (Penguin). And finally, Thomas Hylland Eriksen provides a different slant with his **Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives** (Pluto Press 1993).

The NI Interview

Pandurang Hegde

Jeremy Seabrook speaks with Pandurang Hegde, a dedicated Indian activist fighting for local control of forest lands in his native state of Karnataka.

‘THERE are no dead bodies to capture the attention of the world media, no scenes of carnage,’ says Pandurang Hegde, Indian activist with the *Appiko Forest Movement* in Northern Karnataka. He is talking about a joint forestry-management programme funded by Britain’s Overseas Development Administration (ODA) in the area where he was born and grew up in southern India.

Hegde calls the project ‘disaster by stealth’. The poor become slowly dispossessed and the environment exploited – all under the guise of ‘social forestry’ and ‘democratic participation’. *Appiko* was inspired by *Chipko* – the now famous forest-protection movement of the lower Himalayas. Hegde was involved in the early days of Chipko and remembers the experience as: ‘simply unforgettable. Women protected the trees with their bodies to prevent them from being cut down.’

After a stint with Oxfam in Madhya Pradesh he returned home and has been working to protect the rich forests of Karnataka ever since. ‘I learned that you cannot become a positive agent for change in a community that you do not know,’ he recalls. Now he focuses all his energies on halting the ‘legal and illegal clear-cutting of forests on which people depend for their livelihood.’

Hegde is a modest, unassuming man from a family of areca-nut farmers near Sirsi on the Western Ghats. It is an area where sacred groves and inviolate forest alternate with barren monocultures of eucalyptus and teak – monuments to misplaced ‘social forestry’ experiments of the 1970s and 1980s. ‘It was the next fashionable trend,’ Hegde recalls. In fact it turned out to be ‘another kind of commercialism – plantations which bear no relation to local people’s need for biomass’.

Today he lives on a small farm at the edge of the Ghats, a simple building with no modern amenities. But other things have changed. *Appiko* has few direct confrontations with loggers these days. ‘It is harder to organize resistance now,’ he says, ‘because people are seduced by the promise of cash. As their control of the forest resource is loosened, they fall into deeper dependency on the cash economy.’

> ***The best projects don’t involve outsiders at all, but to say so is seen as a blasphemy against ‘development’***

The new $25-million ODA scheme is supposed to put right all past mistakes, to be real people-centred development. The central goal is to set up Village Forest Committees which would work with the Government Forest Department and share the benefits of replanting on a 50-50 basis. The reality? ‘A few high-profile village committees,’ claims Hegde, ‘while in most places the majority have been excluded from any decision-making’.

In addition, he claims the species planted are up to 80 per cent teak and acacia. ‘They have evicted people who were protecting natural regeneration so they can plant exotic monocultures like acacia from Australia. What does that have to do with maintaining biodiversity?’

‘The reality is that, far from seeing their livelihoods improve, people who have been cultivating rice are being evicted. They are denied access to forest produce which once cushioned them against destitution. Without space for their cattle to graze many have been forced to sell their animals. As far as I can see this so-called popular participation is just another gimmick. People need the security of being able to use the forest, not future promises of cash from timber sales.’

Pandurang Hegde raised his concerns with senior officials and consultants from the British ODA last November. He told them the poor were excluded from decision-making, that evictions were widespread and that species biodiversity was being threatened. The response was open, even sympathetic. But Hegde will wait to see what happens. ‘The new buzzword is “site-specific models”. They seem now to have abandoned the whole basis on which the project was set up. You can’t pin them down.’

Ironically, the villages in Karnataka where people do control the resource-base were set up by the British themselves. ‘These forest *panchayats* were established in the 1920s, mostly on poor lands, where villagers allowed the forests to regenerate naturally. This kind of village-based control can work’, says Hegde. ‘But the people must be trusted to manage the forests themselves. The best projects don’t involve outsiders at all, but to say so is seen as a blasphemy against “development”. We can show them the places where the forest provides everything the people need. That was the point of *Appiko*: self-reliance and a respect for the environment that sustains us. We know. Trust us.’

When *Appiko* was at its peak, villagers would unite against timber contractors who came in the night; they would confront smugglers and illegal loggers.

But to pit themselves against the current project when the prestige of Britain and a host of consultants and experts is at stake is much more difficult. Nonetheless, Hegde believes that as more and more people realize that they are being excluded from the dubious benefits of the scheme they will come to see mass organization as the only response. ‘The Forest Department is the biggest employer. People are frightened. Everywhere in the world it is the same story – the market invades self-reliance, it sets livelihood against life. But for the people of the forests these are the same thing.’ ■

Reviews

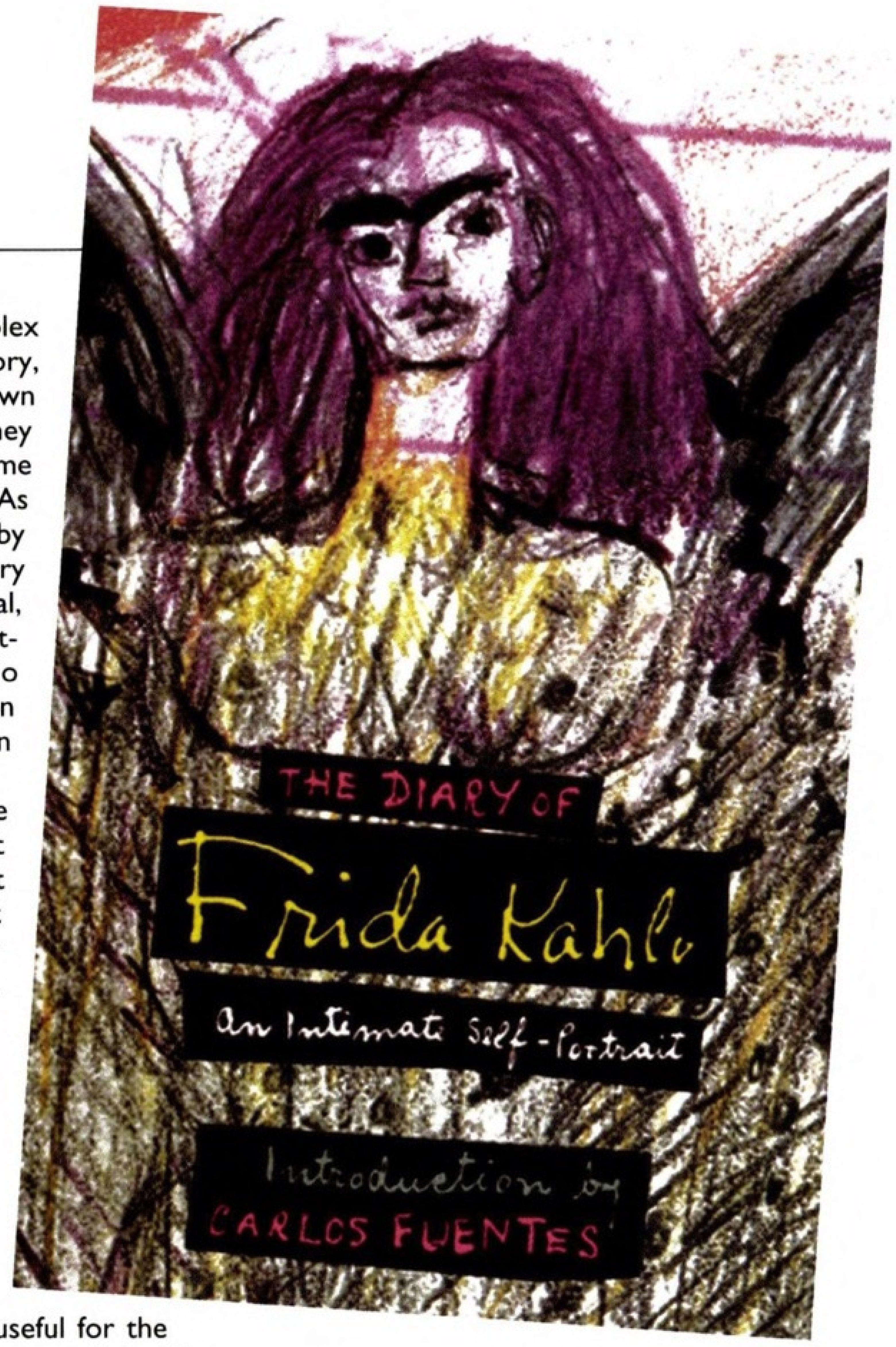
books

The Diary of Frida Kahlo: an intimate self portrait

Introduction by **Carlos Fuentes**
(Bloomsbury ISBN 0-7475-2247-2)

Hailed a precursor to such taboo-breaking feminist artists as Jo Spence, Frida Kahlo probably attracts more attention today than her husband and compatriot Diego Rivera. Kahlo's painted, intimate **Diary** adds not only to our understanding of the art of this powerful, damaged woman but also provides glimpses of her quirky humour and fantastic imagination. The diary itself covers the last ten years of her life from 1944 to 1954 and is a vigorous melange of paintings, drawing, doodles, ink blots, streams of consciousness and entries written in different colour pencils.

In 1925, at the age of 18, Kahlo was involved in a bus accident which left her with a broken pelvis, spine, and other severe injuries. While convalescing she began painting. The physical damage was permanent and although she was able to walk again she had to have over 20 operations and was in pain for most of her life. For Mexican novelist Carlos Fuentes, who has written an inspired introduction to this **Diary**, Kahlo is a symbol of Mexico, the vivid, bloody, ruptured, fruitful land. While Diego Rivera, in his great murals, concentrated on the complex cavalcade of Mexican history, Kahlo's subject was her own body, her internal reality. They are two sides of the same Mexican coin, says Fuentes. 'As the people are cleft in twain by poverty, revolution, memory and hope, so she, the individual, the irreplaceable, the unrepeatable woman called Frida Kahlo is broken, torn inside her own body much as Mexico is torn outside.'



Kahlo would probably have agreed. An ardent communist revolutionary, she lied about her year of birth so that it would coincide with the year of the Mexican Revolution. Like her surrealist contemporaries she tapped her unconscious; the imagery that bubbled up time and again was absolutely Mexican. But towards the end of her life she felt uneasy about the subject matter of her painting and expressed a wish to 'transform it into something useful for the Communist revolutionary movement'. Judging by the embarrassing adulation of Stalin that creeps into the **Diary** at this stage it is perhaps fortunate that she did not.

By taking herself as a starting point and going outwards from there Kahlo 'gave birth' to herself as an artist. Her power is emotional rather than intellectual and her enormous love for Diego Rivera (they divorced briefly when he had an affair with her sister) is as strange, unique and awe-inspiring as her art.

Politics ☆☆☆
Entertainment ☆☆☆☆

VB

music

Cuba Classics: Afro Cuban

by **Merceditas Valdés** *(TUMI CD050)*

Right On Time!

by **Roberto Pla** *(TUMI CD 051)*

In most major cities of the world you can find some salsa, rumba and maybe some mambo to listen to. However, despite the wealth of material, there has been a certain reluctance to look back into Latin Music's roots. This is being vigorously addressed by Britain's Tumi label. A small independent company, it has championed all manifestations of Latin Music ever since it brought the Bolivian folk group Rumillajta to the UK in 1984. Its latest coup is a worldwide distribution deal with Cuba's state record company, EGREM. Cuba's musical roots lie mainly in a history that knits African influences to the sounds of the Spanish colonizers, and no better introduction to these origins could be served than by Merciditas Valdés. A singer whose career began in the 1940s, Valdés was once described a 'living ethnographic monument' – high praise, even though it makes her seem a little dusty. Not a bit of it. The collection of 14 traditional songs to the *orishas* – the Yoruba gods – sparkle with extraordinary energies. This is Latin music as it's rarely heard: Valdés uses minimal instrumentation throughout the album. Attention is focused on drum-carried rhythms and interwoven voices, above which her single vocal dominates. These are praise-songs to gods, certainly, but there's also a real intimacy, a sense of the supernatural's relevance to everyday life. Valdés cajoles, rejoices, converses. But unlike most religious music, which has its format ensured, Valdés adapts the template to create something that is changeable, alive. It is a testament to the ability of her country's Afro-Cuban population to adapt and survive.

Politics ☆☆☆
Entertainment ☆☆☆☆

On a completely different note, the Latin Ensemble led by Colombia's master percussionist, Roberto Pla, has contributed to musical life not only in Latin America but in the US and the UK, where it could at times be found with such unlikely partners as Joe Strummer and Motorhead. **Right on Time** is Pla's long-awaited album which contains much of the repertoire: salsa, cumbia, Latin jazz. It's precise, highly-charged stuff, containing a sense of colour and drama that makes it quite simply an asset to any record collection – to say nothing of a party soundtrack. Pure, unadulterated fun.

Politics ☆☆☆
Entertainment ☆☆☆☆

LG

For more information contact Tumi Music, 8-9 New Bond St. Place, Bath, Avon BA1 1BH, England. Tel: (01225) 480470, Fax: (01225) 331360.

film

Nothing Personal

directed by **Thadeus O'Sullivan**

Adapted from Daniel Mornin's novel *All Our Fault*, **Nothing Personal** is set in Belfast at the time of the IRA cease-fire in 1975 when 'the Troubles' in Northern Ireland were at their most intense. The film follows a trio of edgy young Protestant Loyalist Paramilitaries who find that due to the negotiation of a cease-fire by their superiors, they are suddenly left without a war to fight. On the other side of the thin line which demarcates the two battered territories is Liam, a Catholic who daringly traverses the dangerous divide. When at the beginning of the film an IRA bomb goes off in a Protestant pub, he is there to help pull the victims from the rubble. Over the course of the next 24 hours a sequence of events further entangles the men from the two sides and inevitably another tragedy ensues.

While rooted in the particular problems of Northern Ireland, director Thadeus O'Sullivan's tense and intelligent drama could be set in most countries split by warring factions, since it examines how a loose cannon from either side can jeopardize the delicate peace process. Making its British debut at the London Film Festival the day after the assassination of the Israeli Prime Minister, it had a particular, dreadful resonance. But rather than going for the news-making headlines, the film attempts to examine the personal motivations of those who fight. It also examines the personal consequences. As such it draws some despairing conclusions – inevitably it is the innocent bystanders on both sides who suffer most in the end. **Nothing Personal** reeks of the bloody stalemate in which such turmoil always seems to end.

Politics ☆☆☆
Entertainment ☆☆☆ LF

STAR RATING

Excellent	☆☆☆☆☆
Very good	☆☆☆☆
Good	☆☆☆
Fair	☆☆
Poor	☆

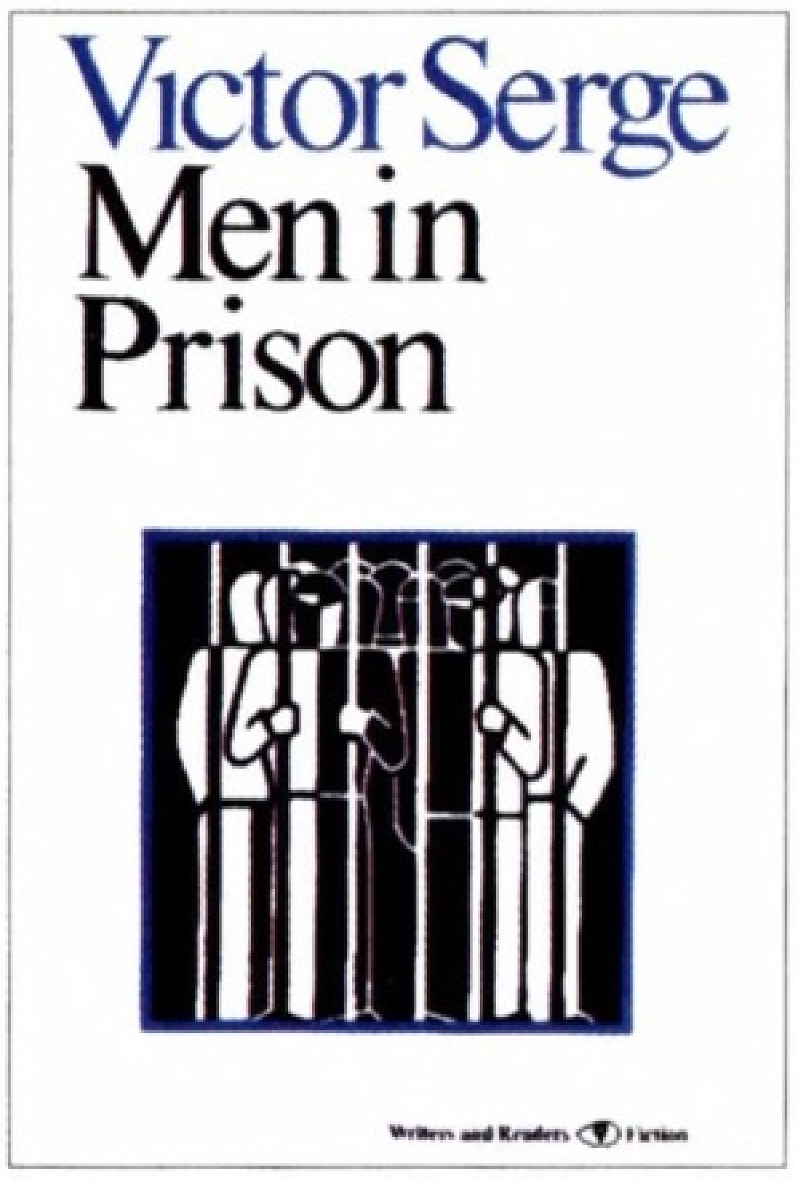
Reviews by **Lizzie Francke, Louise Gray** and **Vanessa Baird**
Reviews editor: **Vanessa Baird**

THE **CLASSIC**

The 'Revolutionary Trilogy'

...being the novels of a brave and tireless political agitator who developed a unique writing style to smuggle out his work.

'WHAT is terrible when you seek the truth is that you find it. You find it and you are no longer free to follow the biases of your personal circle, or to accept fashionable clichés.' So wrote Victor Serge, novelist, poet, historian and political agitator in his autobiography *Memoires of a Revolutionary*. By the time of his penurious death in Mexico in 1947, Serge had experienced every variety of disillusionment and betrayal. Despite this, his convictions remained unsoured and his hope for the future burned undimmed. He had written in his poem *Be Hard* of his belief that 'in time flesh will wear out chains/ In time the mind will make chains soap'. His example of a life lived to the hilt is a chastening but uplifting example to our diminished, passion-starved times.


Victor Serge
Men in Prison
Writers and Readers Fiction

The man who took the pseudonym Victor Serge was born Victor Lvovich Kibalchic in Brussels, Belgium in 1890. His parents were exiled Russian revolutionaries and his childhood was a typical emigré mix of idealism and poverty. Serge never went to school and learned to read in his father's library of revolutionary books. Active from an early age in the left-wing movements of Europe, his refusal to inform on a group of comrades practising 'expropriation' (robbery) led to a five-year jail term from 1912 to 1917. This experience he transmuted into **Men in Prison**, the first novel in his **'Revolutionary Trilogy'**. On his release, he travelled to Barcelona – a city gripped by anarchist and syndicalist fervour. His experiences of the street-fighting here, followed by his deportation to civil-war-torn Russia, were to form the basis of the second and third novels of his trilogy, **Birth of our Power** and **Conquered City**. Taken together these books form a unique and compelling record of some of the most calamitous years of our century. Serge always felt that it was the responsibility of the writer to speak on behalf of all those who have no voice and his books are crammed with the authentic lives of ordinary people. Although often told in the first person, his novels are much more than fictionalized autobiography and much of their power lies in his ability to build the broad picture from a mosaic of small scenes, each centring on a different individual or group. In this way he avoided the sterile tableaux of heroic workers so loved of proletarian hack writers.

Serge's independence was always going to lead him into conflict with Stalin and in 1926 he was expelled from the Communist Party and deprived of all work. His writing during the following years was done in freestanding fragments, sent abroad secretly and published as they were, incomplete and unrevised. This led to Serge developing a unique writing style: both episodic and fast-paced, it perfectly suited the urgency of his message.

Serge was arrested in 1933 and sent to Orianberg, the Central Asian work camp. He would surely have perished there but for a campaign waged on his behalf by André Gide and other Western intellectuals. Serge was released in 1936 and expelled from the Soviet Union. His books and manuscripts were confiscated and two are rumoured still to be languishing in the vaults of the Kremlin. Fleeing Nazi agents, Serge only just escaped to Marseilles, bound for exile in Mexico. Beset by loneliness and poverty, he wrote the *Trilogy of Resistance* which dealt with the Stalinist purges and the beginnings of World War Two,

If Victor Serge had been no more than an exceptionally clearheaded and brave opponent of Stalinist totalitarianism, he might have rated a mention in the footnotes of history. That he also managed to produce powerful and elegiac fiction makes him one of the pivotal figures of our century. His writing on the Gulag prefigures – and often surpasses – that of Koestler and Solzhenitsyn. His polemical work on the Spanish Civil War or the Soviet Show Trials resembles that of Orwell in its willingness to follow arguments to logical and moral conclusions. Anyone wishing to evaluate the ideological bankruptcies of our times and to attempt to build new foundations from the rubble of idealism would do well to seek out this admirable and fascinating man. Serge always spoke of hope amid despair – even when at his lowest ebb: 'I have undergone a little over ten years of various forms of captivity, agitated in seven countries and written twenty books. I own nothing. On several occasions, a press with vast circulation has hurled filth at me because I spoke the truth. Behind us lies a victorious revolution gone astray, several abortive attempts at revolution, and massacres in so great a number as to inspire a certain dizziness. And to think that it is not over yet... I have more confidence in mankind and in the future than ever before…' ■

Peter Whittaker

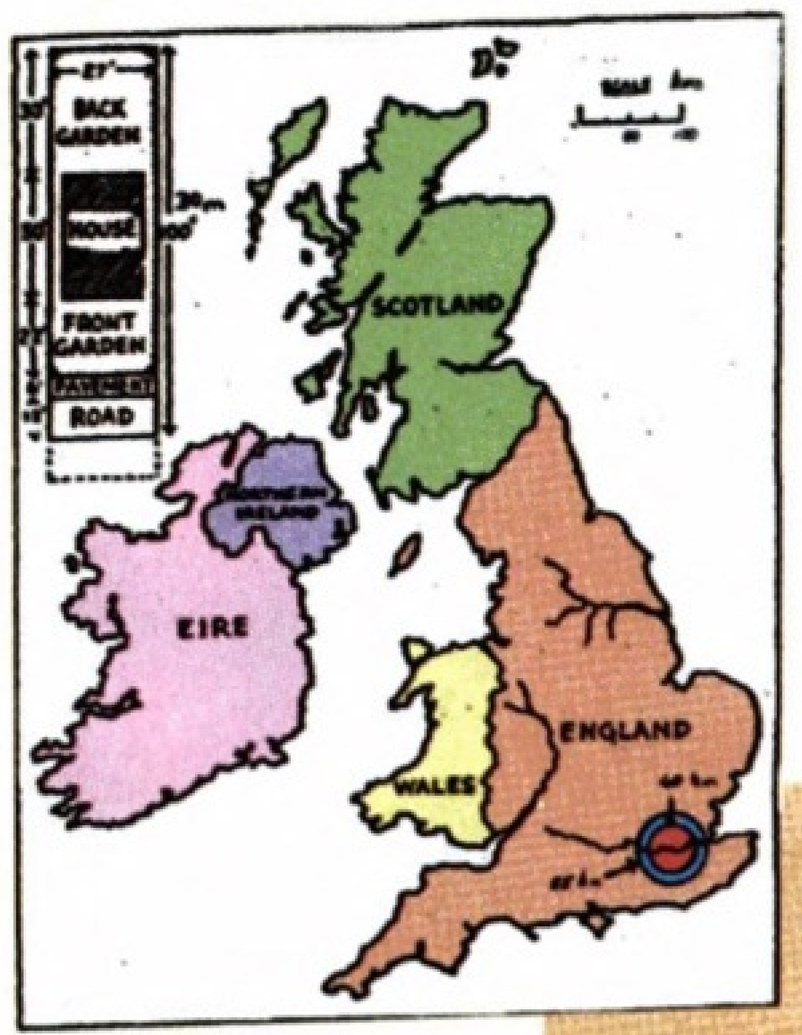
Men In Prison, Birth of Our Power and **Conquered City** (the 'Revolutionary Trilogy') were published by Writers and Readers, London. Other of **Victor Serge**'s books, including *The Case of Comrade Tulayev* are available through AK Distribution, Edinburgh.

Curiosities

QUESTIONS THAT HAVE ALWAYS INTRIGUED YOU ABOUT THE WORLD WILL APPEAR IN THIS, YOUR SECTION, AND BE ANSWERED BY OTHER READERS. PLEASE ADDRESS YOUR ANSWERS AND QUESTIONS TO 'CURIOSITIES'.

The population debate is all about enabling women in the Third World to have fewer children. I find England overpopulated. What's to be done about it?

● The area of land needed to house 70 million people – the number currently living in England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and Eire – could comfortably fit into a 40-kilometre radius from the centre of London. This would require nothing more than 16 houses per acre with 4 persons per house, each house on a plot of land 9 by 30 metres, in groups of 4. This results in a density of 64 persons per acre, which is less than the 100 to 200 per acre that is average in many cities today.



If such living space were still considered to be dense, then at 8 houses to the acre instead of 16, an area with a radius of only 55 kilometres from the centre of London would be needed. I'm not proposing that this be done! These examples serve only to illustrate how little land is required to house 70 million people, giving each person plenty of space.

What's more, enough food could be grown within the above two examples to feed 70 million people if this ever were needed. Past surveys carried out by the British Ministries of Housing and Agriculture have indicated that the retail value of garden produce grown and actually consumed on an average acre of 12 houses slightly exceeded the value, at retail prices, of the output of an average acre of farmland – including market-garden land.

'Too many people' is not the problem. A better question is: 'How much land is owned by whom and to what use is this land put?'

Phil Anderson
Chief Economist SRD Group
Melbourne, Australia

What proportion of Muslim Women cover their faces in public? Is the practice increasing? And do women who cover their faces suffer any discomfort or health problems?

● Dr Kazim's response in **NI 275** contained a few points that need rectifying. At the time of the prophet Muhammed when the Qur'anic verses were revealed, women were divided into three groups: non-Muslims who were free to dress as they pleased, except for nudity; Muslims who were subdivided into the Prophet's wives who were expected to cover themselves completely; and the remaining Muslims who were expected to wear a *hijab* (headscarf) and *jilbab* (outer body covering) such that only the face and hands were exposed. As is mentioned in *Surah 33:59* this was to enable Muslim women to be distinct from non-Muslims and prevent them from being molested. Interestingly, despite this being an injunction on Muslim women, the Islamic *Shari'ah* (way of life) did not proscribe a punishment for not wearing the dress code as detailed. So the assertion that women are being flogged or imprisoned is either incorrect or an example of misrepresentation of Islamic law by the countries concerned. In fact there seems to be more discrimination against women who veil, as demonstrated by the French ban on schoolgirls wearing *'le foulard'* and Turkey not allowing any government employee to wear a *hijab*.

Dr A Siddiqui
Shirley, England

AWAITING YOUR ANSWERS

Apart from lemmings and humans are there any other creatures that commit suicide?

D Gold
Southrop, England

How much energy is needed to manufacture an average-sized car?

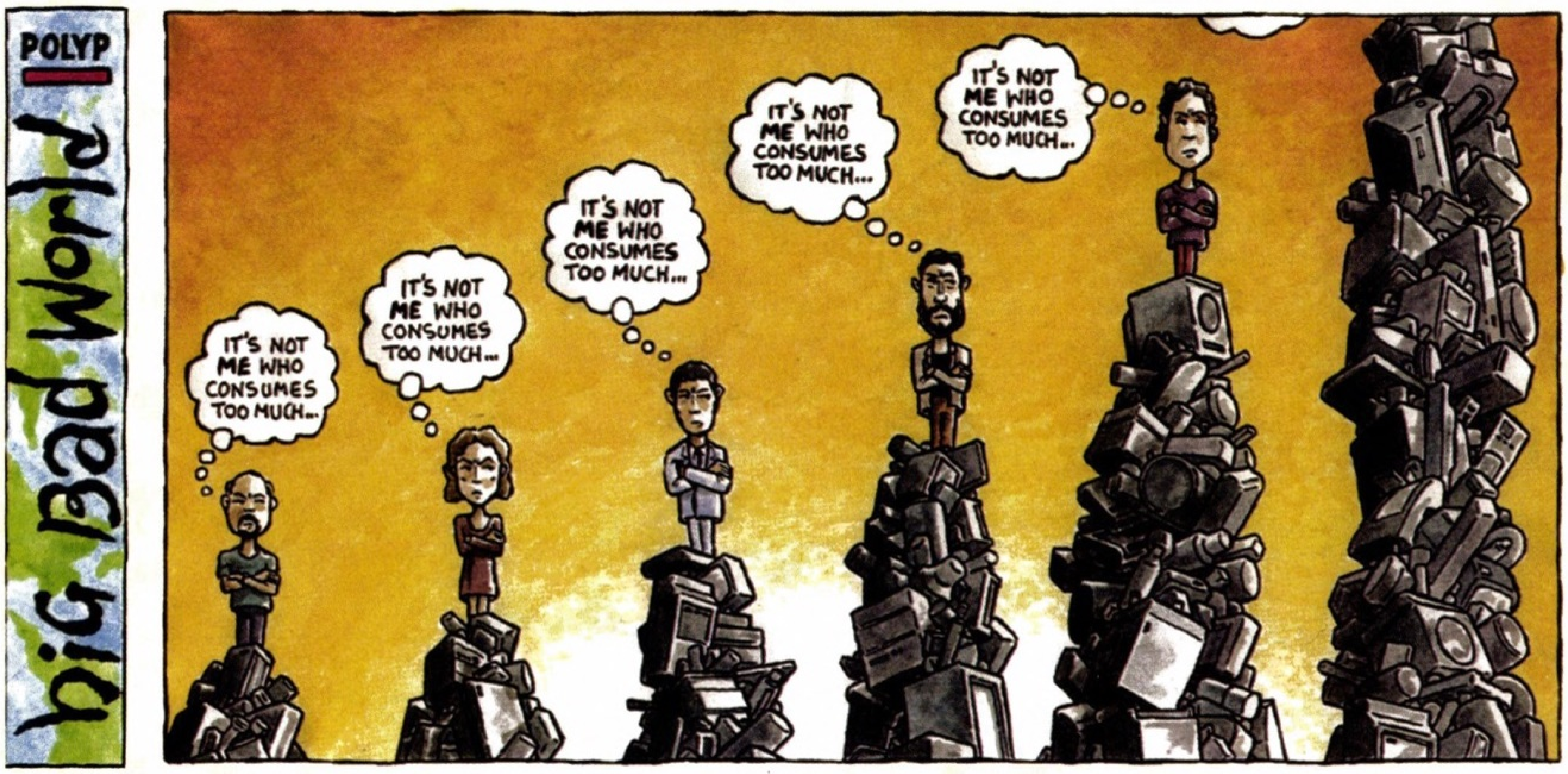
Leigh Cavanagh
Staines, England

Is it 'proven' that long-lived creatures carry the same, unaltered DNA throughout their lives – or is this just an assumption?

Mary Morgans
Southport, England

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR ANSWERS PLEASE SEND THEM TO **CURIOSITIES, NEW INTERNATIONALIST, 55 RECTORY ROAD, OXFORD OX4 1BW, UK,** OR TO YOUR LOCAL NI OFFICE (SEE INSIDE FRONT COVER FOR ADDRESSES).

THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS SECTION ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF **NI**.


POLYP
big Bad World
IT'S NOT ME WHO CONSUMES TOO MUCH...
IT'S NOT ME WHO CONSUMES TOO MUCH...
IT'S NOT ME WHO CONSUMES TOO MUCH...
IT'S NOT ME WHO CONSUMES TOO MUCH...
IT'S NOT ME WHO CONSUMES TOO MUCH...

Dry words

Her boyfriend has been caught up in a conflict between different colonial legacies in Cameroon – **Lucy Davis** makes a plea for justice.

In English-speaking Cameroon, in North West Province, there is a telling term for all written correspondence. Whether it's congratulations on the birth of a child or condolences on the death of an elder, when there are ceremonies which peasant farmers or cattle herders are unable to attend they ask young students of the village to write down the message for them on pages torn from school exercise books. The message is called 'dry word'. This term reflects all the impotence I feel now in trying to communicate the dangerous and complicated situation facing my boyfriend and four of his compatriots in Cameroon.

Nuhu Salihu Jafaru and I met while working together at the Mbororo Social and Cultural Development Association of Cameroon (MBOSCUDA). The Association works for the cultural rights and development of the previously nomadic Mbororo people. It has 5,000 members and runs school projects, land-rights initiatives, pastoral development projects, women's groups, health-education and family-planning programmes.

The Association has always had a delicate relationship with the Cameroon Government and with one man who has great influence with it, Al Hadji Baba Danpullo, in particular. In October last year he had four leading members of the Association – Musa Usman Ndamba, Nana Sali Sardou, Jaji Manu Gidado and Nuhu – locked up in the Bamenda police station in North West Province. They were held without charges or access to lawyers in appalling and violent conditions for a period of two weeks. After pressure from international human-rights organizations and embassies they were released on bail. The four have now been charged with 'Defamation of Character of a Leading Government Official' – Al Hadji Baba Danpullo.

Nuhu Salihu Jafaru: slowly being broken by uncertainty and fear, unable to work or sleep.

COURTESY OF LUCY DAVIS

This man is very wealthy and has a diplomatic passport. He views the Mbororo people as his personal clients – he could guarantee their vote for the ruling party at election time. Now he has taken over large portions of the land where their cattle graze. I have personally experienced the way he uses the 'court' at his private ranch in the North West Province to try, sentence and 'request fines' from local Mbororo cattle-grazers, using trumped-up charges to extort money. MBOSCUDA has been fighting for land rights and to put an end to patrimonial politics, so conflict with Al Hadji Baba Danpullo was inevitable.

The political situation in Cameroon is extremely volatile. Gestures towards democratization have raised expectations and led to the creation of several new grassroots movements, opposition political parties and newspapers. The regime refused to cede power to the winners of the elections in 1992 and has since played 'cat and mouse' with critics, periods of brutal repression following free expression. 'Structural adjustment' policies and currency devaluation have left the Government unable to pay civil servants for periods as long as 18 months.

Cameroon was once a German colony, then divided between British and French occupying forces after World War Two. In theory British and French educational and administrative systems coexist – in practice the Francophone majority dominate. The Anglophone Movement grew and lobbied unsuccessfully for the reinstatement of the previous federal system. It now seeks outright independence. Delegations have been sent to the European Union and the United Nations. Strikes and marches have been organized at which provocative material about the present regime was circulated.

It is on these texts that the defamation claims are based. But the material came from the Anglophone Movement conference and was not written by any of the four Mbororos facing charges. They have been accused of allying themselves with the Anglophone Movement and of being 'national traitors'. The issue has been blown up by the opposition media into something far greater than a single, non-governmental organization working for the rights of a specific group of people who are in conflict with Mr Al Hadji Baba Danpullo.

Court hearings in December were adjourned when he declared that he wished personally to attend the next session. He says he wishes to bring further and as yet unspecified charges against the four.

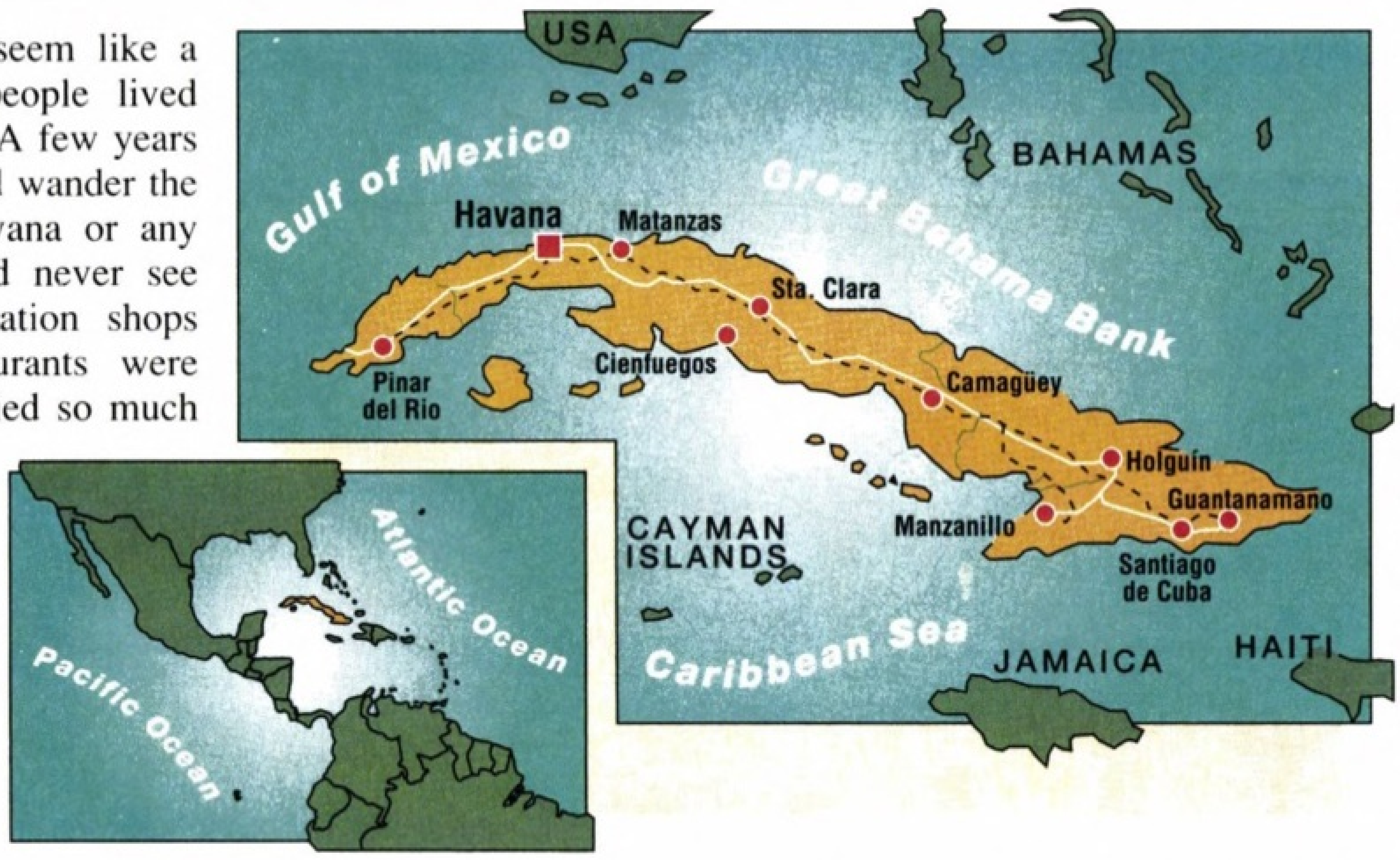
All this does not bode well. I recently spoke to Nuhu by telephone and he sounded extremely scared and disillusioned. He is unable to work or sleep, is restless, sick and slowly being broken by constant uncertainty and fear. Five of his close friends have been bought off by Al Hadji Danpullo – the economic situation in Cameroon makes people desperate, unwilling to stick their necks out and susceptible to bribery.

I am writing these ineffective 'dry words' today in the hope that outside media attention will put pressure on the Cameroon Government to allow my Nuhu and those accused with him to continue their work in safety. I have contacted the mainstream media in Britain and Denmark but unfortunately they are only interested in 'events'. As in Nigeria with the death of Ken Saro Wiwa, the interest comes only when it's too late. Cameroon is sensitive to outside opinion and – fortunately perhaps – there are no other international economic interests at stake. ■

Politely written 'letters of concern' should be sent to His Excellency President Paul Biya, fax: 237 221 699. Copies to Nuhu Jafaru, c/o Lawyer Harmony Bobga Mbouton, PO Box 315 Bamenda, North West Province, Cameroon, tel/fax: 237 361 614 and to Lucy Davis at Øster Allé 25 v 35, 2100 Copenhagen, Denmark, fax: 45 35 36 02 15.

Country profile

Cuba



CUBA used to seem like a land where people lived without food. A few years ago, you could wander the streets of Havana or any provincial town and never see anything to eat. Ration shops were empty, restaurants were closed, nobody carried so much as a loaf of bread.

Today all that has changed. In old Havana restaurants are clamouring for business. In the cramped front rooms of private homes, tourists and anyone else with dollars can sit down to the Cuban specialities of fried pork and *moros y cristianos* (rice and red beans). Gaudy neon 24-hour bars light up the capital's otherwise dark streets. Once the preserve of foreigners and the political élite, dollar shops sell a wide range of groceries to Cubans with 'convertible pesos'. Farmers' markets have brought fruit and vegetables into the cities.

The reappearance of food is one of the most striking signs of Cuba's dramatic economic about-turn. Once the model of a centralized, state-planned economy, Cuba is turning to foreign investment and free-market reform with enthusiasm. New investment laws have encouraged companies from Europe, Canada and Mexico into joint ventures in mining, sugar and tourism. There is talk of building holiday homes for foreigners.

The recent influx of dollars has pulled Cuba out of an economic nosedive which began in 1989 with the collapse of the Soviet Union. When direct and indirect subsidies worth five billion dollars a year dried up overnight, Cuba's economy contracted by about a third in four years. Export markets in the Eastern bloc disappeared, and imports had to be paid for with hard currency. But Cuban-style capitalism seems to have reversed the decline. Buoyant nickel exports and a tourism boom have led to modest 2.5 per cent growth in 1995.

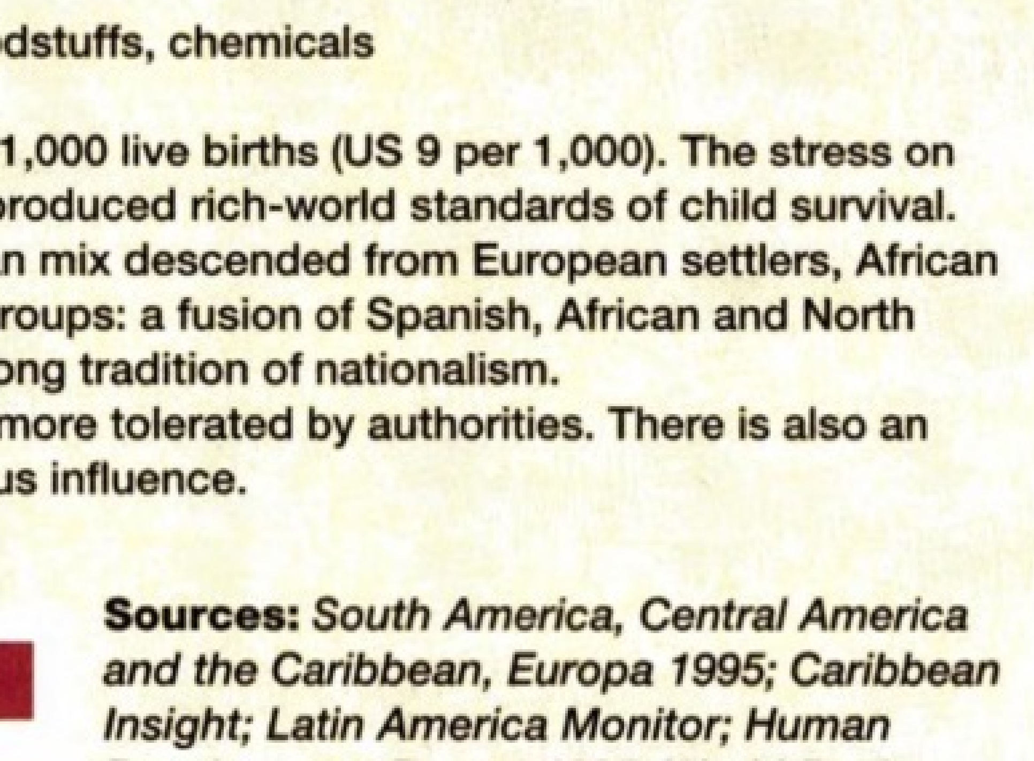
If Cuba's changing fortunes have postponed speculation about communism's imminent demise, this is no economic miracle. The cost of free-market transition is growing inequality and a threat to the Revolution's most cherished values. Those without access to dollars from their work or relatives overseas resent the nouveaux riches. Closing or streamlining loss-making state companies will create unemployment that the informal sector cannot mop up.

Presiding over the island's new economic thrust is the unlikely figure of Fidel Castro, the world's longest-ruling head of government. Castro, who led the 1959 Revolution against a corrupt US-backed dictatorship, has reluctantly accepted that Cuba must embrace free-market policies. Reportedly impressed by China's blend of economic liberalization and one-party rule, he shows no signs of leaving power. Few Cubans, whether they love or loathe him, could imagine life without Castro, and most fear the return of Miami's right-wing emigrés more. Cuba is still proud of some of the best health and education provision in the Americas. The challenge for Castro and his team of younger technocrats is to protect this while opening up to foreign investment and trimming budgets.

The US is still as hostile to Castro's Cuba as it was during the Cold War. Despite losing a series of UN votes, Washington insists on maintaining its stranglehold. The Florida business community must watch in frustration as investors from elsewhere move into the new open-for-business Cuba. ■

James Ferguson

AT A GLANCE


JULIO ETCHART

Leader President Fidel Castro Ruz

Economy GNP per capita $1,170 (US $24,740). This World Bank estimate has been cited every year since 1988. In reality most pesos are not yet convertible – 1,180 pesos was the GDP per capita in 1994.

Monetary unit: Peso

Main exports: Sugar, nickel, tobacco, seafood, tourism

Main imports: Machinery, foodstuffs, chemicals

People 11.0 million

Health Infant mortality 9 per 1,000 live births (US 9 per 1,000). The stress on equality and healthcare has produced rich-world standards of child survival.

Culture A Hispanic Caribbean mix descended from European settlers, African slaves and other immigrant groups: a fusion of Spanish, African and North American influences, with a long tradition of nationalism.

Religion: Catholicism is now more tolerated by authorities. There is also an important Afro-Cuban religious influence.

Language: Spanish

NI star rating

EXCELLENT	★★★★★
GOOD	★★★★
FAIR	★★★
POOR	★★
APPALLING	★

Sources: *South America, Central America and the Caribbean, Europa 1995; Caribbean Insight; Latin America Monitor; Human Development Report 1995; World Bank, World Development Report 1995; State of the World's Children 1996.*

Previously profiled August 1983

STAR RATINGS

INCOME DISTRIBUTION ★★★★
The egalitarian welfare system is now under threat from the reform programme.
1983 ★★★★★

LITERACY ★★★★★
94 per cent: one of the Revolution's greatest achievements.
1983 ★★★★★

SELF-RELIANCE ★★★
The abrupt end of Soviet aid has forced Cuba to diversify.
1983 ★★

FREEDOM ★★
Strict censorship and harsh treatment of dissidents, justified by US military threat.
1983 ★★★

POSITION OF WOMEN ★★★★
A good education and employment record, but there are few women in the top echelons of the Communist Party.
1983 ★★★★

LIFE EXPECTANCY ★★★★★
75 years, again a remarkable achievement for a low-income country (US 76 years).
1983 ★★★★★

POLITICS

NI ASSESSMENT ★★★
The Cuban Communist Party is now trying to steer a precarious Chinese-style course between economic liberalization and continuing one-party rule. It still has much popular support but must come to terms with a younger generation which takes health and education for granted and is impatient for change.

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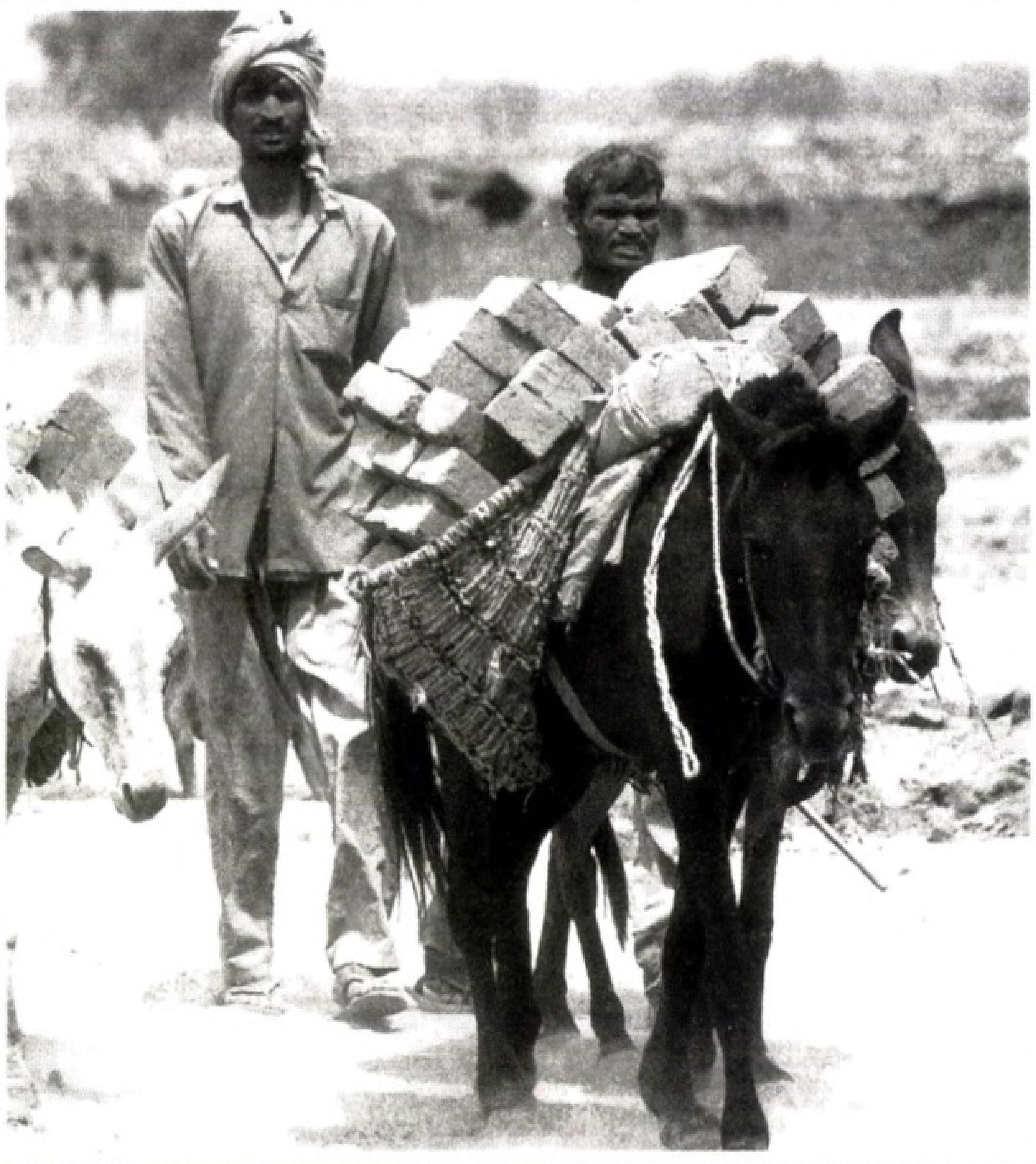

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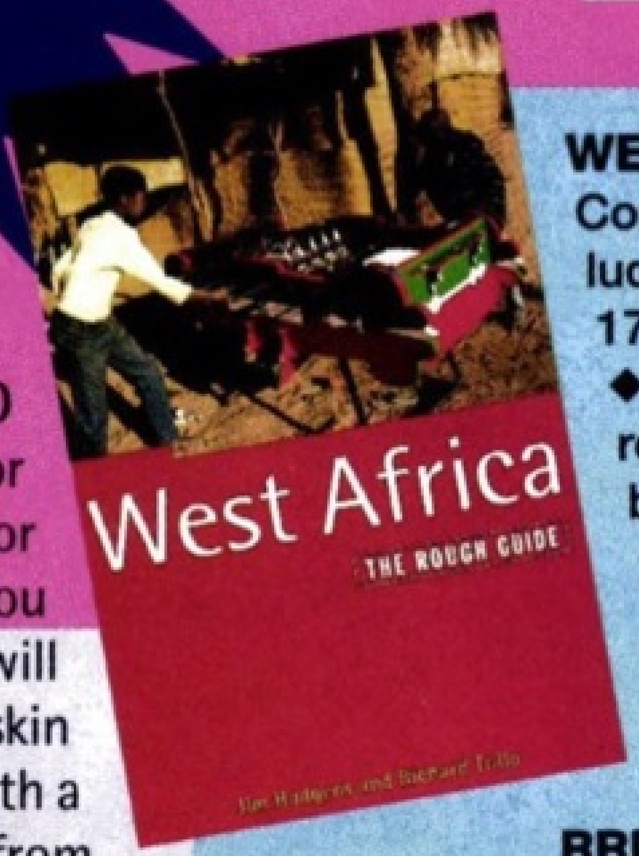

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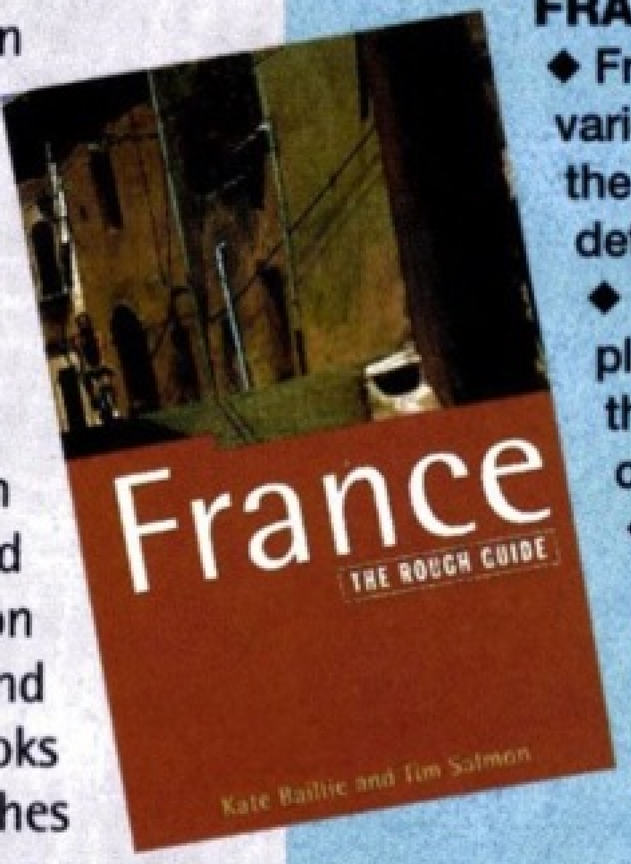

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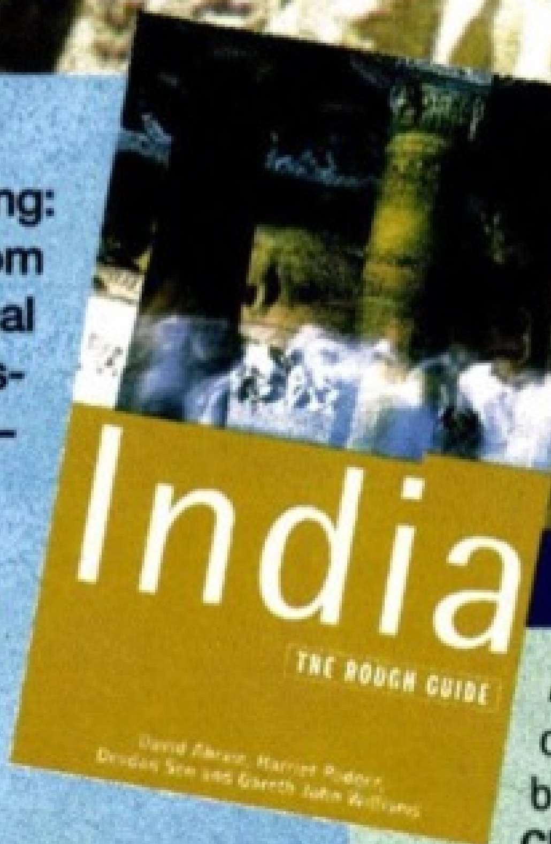

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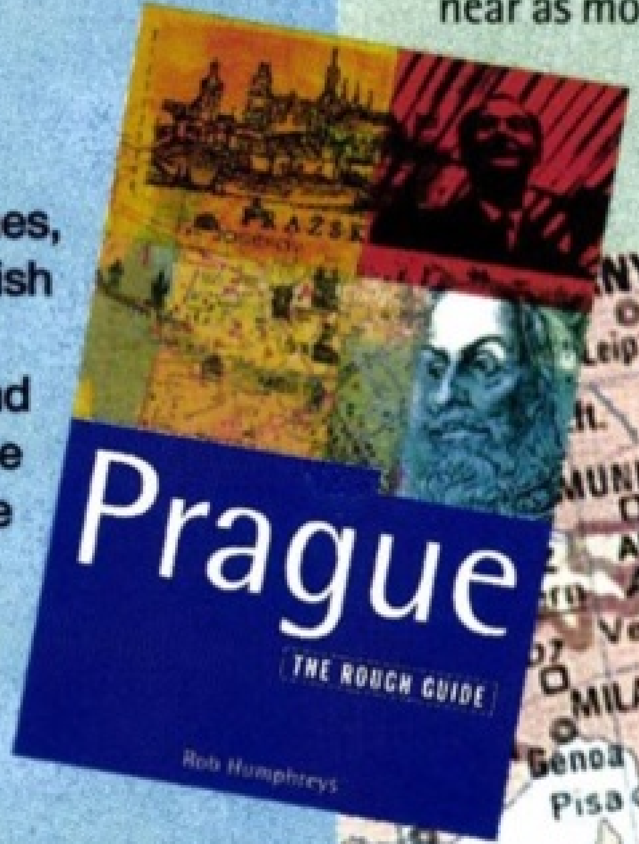

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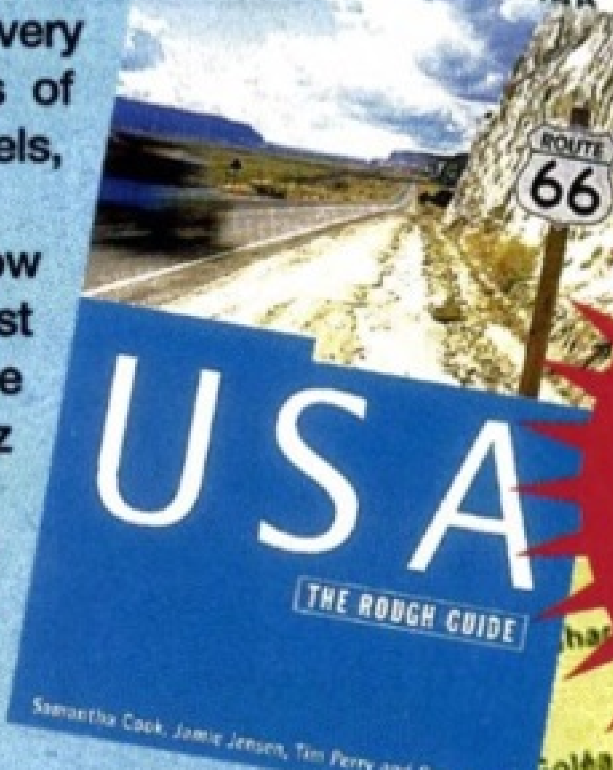

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